

Too early to talk of Mideast bank — Saudi minister

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Finance Minister Mohammad Abal Khail on Wednesday said it was "premature" to talk about setting up a Middle East development bank saying its goals had yet to be defined. The proposals to set up such a bank were made at October's conference in Casablanca, Morocco, on economic development in the Middle East and North Africa. But Mr. Abal Khail told journalists after a meeting of finance ministers from the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that its goals "were still badly defined." He added the ministers from the GCC — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia — had not discussed the proposal. On Tuesday the Israeli foreign ministry said U.S. President Bill Clinton had invited the group of countries which want to set up a Middle East development bank for talks in Washington from January 10 to 12. A ministry spokesman said representatives of foreign and finance ministries of around 20 countries were expected to attend the talks on how to establish such a bank and its functions.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية الراية

Musharraf confirms his nomination as envoy to Israel

SOUTH SHUNEH (AP) — Marwan Musharraf, a former spokesman for the Jordanian peace negotiating team with Israel, said Wednesday he was "eager" to assume his duty as the Kingdom's first ambassador to the Jewish state. Speaking to reporters, Mr. Musharraf said: "It is a challenging position, but I'm proud and I look forward to serving my nation." Mr. Musharraf, who has previously declined comment on his nomination, will be the first Jordanian diplomat to assume such a post since the foundation of the Jewish state five decades ago and the second Arab ambassador to Israel after Egypt. The 38-year-old ambassador-designate, who has served in several government posts in the past 10 years, said no date had yet been set for his departure to Israel. Mr. Musharraf spoke on the fringes of a meeting of a newly formed joint Jordan-Israeli commission entrusted with negotiating and executing agreements listed in the October peace treaty.

Volume 19 Number 5788

AMMAN THURSDAY-FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8-9, 1994, RAJAB 4-5, 1415

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

Government presents '95 budget to Parliament



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali addresses the Lower House of Parliament Wednesday over his government's fiscal policies for 1995 (photos by Youssef Alsan)



Majali: Jordan sought greater regional role, not money for peace

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Wednesday said that Jordan did not make peace with Israel to get quick economic benefits but rather to secure its rights and its role in the region.

The prime minister, who sought to lower expectations of the peace era, told Jordanians that although peace promises a brighter future for the Kingdom, there was a great deal of hard work to be done to fight unemployment

and poverty. The prime minister, in a speech to the Lower House of Parliament, said that peace did not only mean peace with Israel but a transformation of the country's regional and international role.

He told deputies that if Jordan had not entered the peace process, the Kingdom would have been on the receiving end of plans formulated by others. "The 1995 budget is one of the most ambitious ones" in

Jordan's history, Dr. Majali said.

"The peace we signed and ratified (with Israel) carries the promise of a better future," Dr. Majali said.

Dr. Majali said there had been a considerable growth in foreign investment in the past few months, amounting to several hundred million dollars.

Following are major excerpts of an address by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali in Parliament, Wednesday,

upon the presentation of the 1995 fiscal budget.

JORDAN is under exceptional circumstances affecting all aspects of its life. The 1995 budget has thus been designed to serve as one of the most ambitious budgets because people have high expectations, but also apprehensions, and look to this budget as reflecting their aspirations.

The government is submitting here the budget in detail

so that the door will later be opened to comprehensive dialogues over its provisions.

The peace treaty promises a better future for the Kingdom. But this brighter future has not been a price we have paid for by signing the treaty.

Had we calculated the gains in fils and dirhams we would not have embarked on signing the treaty; we chose instead to take the stand of honour and reach the treaty

(Continued on page 7)

Gammoh — Budget aims at self-reliance

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali seeks to adopt policies that will lead Jordan to self-reliance, ultimately ensuring that expenditures are covered from local revenues, Minister of Finance Sami Gammoh told Parliament Wednesday.

Mr. Gammoh stressed the need to accord priority for the army and security forces to develop their capabilities and improve their performance to guarantee the security of the Kingdom and its people and to protect public freedoms.

The draft budget, he said, provides for cancelling exemptions from taxes and customs duties granted for government departments and underlines the need to continue efforts to develop the administrative system.

He said the government seeks to achieve a six per cent growth rate in the gross domestic product and to maintain the current price level and continue building foreign currency reserves.

The finance minister added that the government will also seek to reduce foreign debts and increase exports while at the same time reducing imports.

Following are major excerpts from the speech made by Finance Minister Sami Gammoh at the Lower House of Parliament Wednesday introducing his 1995 fiscal budget.

... The peace era we are passing through now poses grave challenges for us and requires the efforts of all of

(Continued on page 7)

U.N. says Jordanian hostage in Bosnia released

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — The United Nations said that the Bosnian Serbs had freed a seriously ill Jordanian peacekeeper on Wednesday after a Russian soldier volunteered to take his place.

Chief U.N. spokesman Joe Sills said that the Jordanian major, suffering from a heart condition, was on his way to Zagreb. "The swap was made and he is now en route to Zagreb," Mr. Sills said.

Earlier reports said that Maj. Zaid was reportedly bedridden with a deteriorating heart condition. Bosnian Serbs had earlier reneged on a promise to release him in exchange for another observer and instead took the new observer and his driver hostage.

"We regard this as a blatantly inhumane act against a seriously ill, unarmed military observer... I think the people responsible for this should and will be held accountable for it," said Mr. Sills.

He said U.N. officials were quickly trying to win Maj. Zaid's release.

"This sort of thing has got to be brought to an end..." British ambassador, Sir David Hannay, said after a Security Council meeting Tuesday. The council, however, did not discuss Bosnia during Tuesday's closed discussions.

Maj. Zaid, whose first name was not immediately available, fell ill after he and three other U.N. military observers were taken hostage 10 days ago at the airfield in Banja Luka in northwestern Bosnia, Mr. Sills said.

"We requested some days ago his medical evacuation and the Serbian authorities blocked this evacuation for a period of four days, saying that they would only allow it if we would provide a replacement hostage for him."

"We declined to do that, but after the period of four days his condition had worsened so that we felt for humanitarian reasons we really had to give in to this outrageous demand," Mr. Sills said.

U.N. officials say there are still about 300 peacekeepers being held hostage by Serbs.

Alleged killer turns himself in

AMMAN (J.T.) — A 22-year-old man, identified as Sami Ahmad, surrendered to police yesterday afternoon alleging that he killed a 52-year-old man, Khalid Mohammad, the prosecutor general said Wednesday.

Prosecutor Abdul Rahim Abu Hatoum told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview that Ahmad, a resident of Ta'a Al Ali and real estate dealer committed the crime in the vicinity of Jiza, 20 kilometers south of Amman.

Mr. Ahmad and his victim had reportedly gone to Jiza to view a piece of land that he presumably wanted to buy from the victim, the prosecutor general said.

Mr. Abu Hatoum, however, said that the initial investigation points to other motives. He said more investigations will be carried out on Thursday.

He said that the alleged killer stabbed his victim many times in the head and neck and then drove over him with his car. "He only turned himself in because the victim's family knew they went out together," Mr. Abu Hatoum said.

He said that the victim was married and had "some" daughters and lived in Abu Nusair neighbourhood.

Budget debate promises tough test for the Majali government

By Ghadeer Taher
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Wednesday strongly defended Jordan's peace treaty with Israel and his economic policies as his government presented a JDI.674 billion draft budget for 1995 to the Lower House of Parliament.

The prime minister, whose government had suffered a blow with the resignation of Deputy Prime Minister Thouqan Al Hindawi Monday, said that Jordan did not make peace in return for quick economic gains but rather to regain the Kingdom's rights and secure its regional role.

After the speech (see story above) deputies, who spoke to the Jordan Times, said that the House was not very encouraged by the

draft budget or convinced of the ability of the economic team in the Majali government to meet the requirements of the peace era.

Supporters of Dr. Majali said critics of the draft budget have to be realistic and take into account that the government is still executing an economic restructuring programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1989.

"The government will face a tough House once the debate is opened," said a centrist deputy. "For many of us in the House, the 1995 draft budget sounds too much like the one presented for 1994, without any of the recommendations we made last year."

These deputies said they were disappointed that the

peace treaty with Israel but is rather a full transformation of our regional and international role. We are faced with two options: to leave to others the task of planning our future for us and in that case we will find ourselves in a position in which we are forced to co-exist with those plans against our will, or take part in formulating our future ourselves and exert our own influence on the course of events."

Dr. Majali appeared to be responding to Mr. Hindawi and others, who have criticised the government's efforts to ensure financial aid to Jordan after it signed a peace treaty with Israel.

Although one deputy said that this is the "best budget we could hope for," he said the question now is

(Continued on page 7)



T. air Majesties King Hussein, Queen Noor, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and His Royal Highness Prince Claus Wednesday attend the opening at the Royal Cultural Centre of an exhibition, Petrascape, by Dutch artist Gertie Bierenbroodspot (see story on page 3)

Jordanian-Israeli committee concludes meeting; Palestinian delegation starts talks on refugees

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian-Israeli committee charged with the implementation of Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty concluded a meeting at Deir Alla in the Jordan Valley Wednesday.

Dr. Hani Mulki, the head of the Jordanian side, told Petra news agency that the two sides discussed the general framework for the work of the sub-committees, and will submit that to the two governments for approval before holding the next meeting on Dec. 18 at Lake Tiberias on the Israeli side.

Dr. Mulki said that starting on Sunday five of these sub-committees would start discussions on transport, environment, agriculture, water, crime and drugs. The talks will be held at different locations on Tiberias, the Dead Sea and Sheikh Hus-

sein Bridge. Dr. Mulki said. He said that discussions on economic cooperation were postponed until the joint committee's next meeting on Dec. 18.

According to Dr. Mulki the process of demarcation of borders between the two countries was proceeding according to plan. He said that all land mines on both sides will be removed by February stressing that all committee meetings would conclude in nine months.

Meanwhile the Jordanian-Palestinian committee on displaced persons held a meeting at the Foreign Ministry in Amman and focused its attention on matters related to information about the number of displaced persons and need for reasserting their rights and ensuring their repatriation.

Asem Ghosheh, member

of the Jordanian committee, said that the meeting paved the way for a four-nation committee meeting grouping Jordan, Egypt, Palestine and Israel that has been entrusted to discuss the question of refugees and displaced persons.

He said that the two sides agreed that Jordan, Palestine and Egypt hold a separate meeting in advance of the four-nation meeting.

Meanwhile, Walid Zaout, a member of the Palestinian delegation, said that he would demand that 254,000 displaced persons should have their permits allowing them to return to Palestine be renewed.

He said these displaced persons, 200,000 in Egypt and 54,000 in Jordan, have had their permits cancelled by the Israeli authorities.

Little progress results from Christopher visit

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher negotiated a ceasefire in the Israeli-Syrian war of words and soothed Palestinian fears, but left unanswered all the real questions on his seventh Middle East peace shuttle of 1994.

Israeli leaders struggled to come up with the right words Wednesday to put a positive spin on the visit, but they agreed nothing much had changed.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin noted an improvement in "tone," but admitted: "I don't yet see any clear change in position."

"The main thing is that the tone is better," he added after a week of verbal battles between the two old enemies.

"Christopher gave me the impression that in the future we will be able to overcome some of the difficulties."

"don't expect a breakthrough."

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid also warned to the weather. "This visit has lifted the fog which hung over the talks."

But he too confessed: "There is no fundamental change in the Syrian and Israeli positions."

The days of high hopes and reports of "major progress" seemed far away as Christopher trotted out the cliches of three years of stop-start negotiations.

He said he was "narrowing the gaps" and the parties were "serious."

The secretary arrived in Israel on Tuesday, urging both sides to move forward.

But he lined up behind Israel to criticise Syrian President Hafez Assad's warning that Syria preferred the "current situation" rather than surrender.

Israel has offered a phased withdrawal on the Golan Heights ahead of talks on a final deal.

Israel denies it wants Oslo deal renegotiated

CAIRO (AP) — The chief Israeli negotiator with the PLO Wednesday pledged his country will adhere to autonomy agreements despite second thoughts following attacks by extremists in Israel and the occupied territories.

Uri Savir told reporters after two days of talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation that reports of Israel's desire to renegotiate parts of the September 1993 self-rule pact were incorrect.

"We clearly reiterated Israel's determination to implement the next phase (of the accord) in all its parts," said Mr. Savir, one of the Israeli officials who secretly negotiated the agreement in Norway.

He added that within the accord "we can find the necessary flexibility to... overcome obstacles that exist on the ground."

The talks dealt with a further redeployment of Israeli troops in the occupied West Bank away from

Palestinian cities and towns and the scheduling of elections for a representative assembly.

The autonomy accord calls for an Israeli pullback from Arab population centres before elections.

Israeli forces left the city of Jericho last spring but thousands still patrol the rest of the West Bank, home to nearly one million Palestinians and 120,000 Jewish settlers.

Earlier, PLO negotiator Saeb Erekat accused the Israelis of stalling by proposing a rediscussion of the clauses dealing with further withdrawals.

Israeli officials have expressed reservations about withdrawing after a string of attacks by Islamic extremists, including the Oct. 19 bus bombing in downtown Tel Aviv which killed 22 people.

A Palestinian negotiator said the Israelis proposed holding elections without moving their troops.

ملكا صلا لامل

Izetbegovic says Muslim states will give more aid to Bosnia

By Wendy Lubetkin
USIA

GENEVA — Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic says Muslim countries in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) are willing to provide the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) with more peacekeeping troops and are ready to assist Bosnia with more financial support and humanitarian aid.

Mr. Izetbegovic spoke following a Dec. 6 meeting of the OIC Contact Group on Bosnia, which brought together foreign or vice ministers from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey as well as diplomatic representatives from Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan and Bangladesh.

Past support of Bosnia by the Muslim countries was "significant but not sufficient," Mr. Izetbegovic said at a joint press conference with the OIC ministers. "We know very well that the billions of Muslims in the world can help Bosnia more than before."

Asserting that UNPROFOR had failed to fulfill its mandate under U.N. Security Council resolutions, Mr. Izetbegovic said he was asking the Islamic countries to play a "more active role" and provide more troops to the U.N. peacekeeping force.

He said the OIC appeared ready to support all of his requests. "We limited our military request to asking for an increased number of troops from Islamic countries," he said, noting that OIC states also agreed to set up a "common financial fund" for Bosnia.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sardar Asf Ali said the OIC meeting produced an action plan and declaration on Bosnia which will be released later.

The first element of the action plan will be a demand for a meeting between the OIC Contact Group and the international Contact Group comprised of the United States, Russia, France, Britain and Germany, he said. OIC ministers also reaffirmed their commitment to

the territorial integrity of Bosnia and firmly rejected any proposal for a federation or confederation between the Bosnian-Serbs and Belgrade, he said.

He added that the OIC is opposed to any lifting of sanctions against Serbia-Montenegro unless the conditions are met: that Belgrade recognises Bosnia as a state, that it accepts deployment of UNPROFOR troops along the border, and that the Bosnian Serbs accept the peace plan as offered.

Egypt's Minister Foreign Affairs Amr Musa said the OIC could no longer countenance "the unfair treatment of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

"We are not working from the standpoint that this is a war between Muslims and others," he said. "This is an international war, an aggression by one country against another."

"We want UNPROFOR to implement and respect its mandate. That is why we are calling for a joint meeting with the five-power Contact Group."

Hrawi orders corruption probe

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's prosecutor-general Munif Oueidat will study files handed over by President Elias Hrawi accusing two top Muslim political leaders of corruption, judicial sources said on Wednesday.

They said Mr. Hrawi delivered files on Tuesday on former parliament Speaker Hussein Huseini and former Prime Minister Omar Karami, whom he accused last week of understating the price of properties they bought in order to avoid taxes.

The accusations by Mr. Hrawi, whose own son Roy has been linked by a parliamentary deputy to drug dealing, were unprecedented. No Lebanese president has previously lodged specific corruption charges against named politicians.

Mr. Hrawi made the accusations while rallying to the defence of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri during the weekend after he announced his resignation last Friday citing obstruction from critics accusing him of corruption.

Mr. Huseini and Mr. Karami are parliamentary deputies and have been prominent critics of Mr. Hrawi and Mr. Hariri. In the 1980s and early 1990s their offices made them the highest Shiite Muslim and Sunni Muslim officials in the state.

Mr. Hrawi stunned Lebanon's politicians last week when he indicated Mr. Karami fiddled taxes while prime minister and said he should be in jail.

"If this happened in any other country in the world, whether backward or advanced, he who did it would go to jail," Mr. Hrawi was quoted as telling Beirut's *Ad-Diyar* newspaper on Saturday.

He also asked pointedly where Mr. Huseini got \$8 million to buy land.

The two politicians denied the accusations, asking where Mr. Hrawi himself got the money to build a private "palace" in a Beirut suburb, and challenged him to a televised debate.

Newspaper speculated that Mr. Hrawi made the accusa-

tions to signal to Damascus, Beirut's main power broker, that he would not accept Mr. Karami as a successor to Mr. Hariri.

He also dismissed former premier Salim Hoss, a likely candidate for the job, as "this irresponsible man."

Mr. Hariri reversed his resignation decision on Tuesday, after mediation by Syrian leaders.

But Mr. Hrawi also indicated that he wanted a crusade against corruption in high places, saying the time for covering up corruption was over.

Judicial sources said on Tuesday authorities will probe charges by a parliamentary deputy that former MPs were bribed to pass a 1991 law setting up the \$3-billion Soldiers company rebuilding central Beirut.

Ahmad Taqiedine, senior prosecutor for financial affairs, will also question the deputy, Najah Wakim, on other allegations he made last month of widespread political corruption and bribery, the sources said.

2 warships cover Indian withdrawal from Somalia

MO'ADISHU (R) — An Indian naval task force of three warships steamed into the southern Somalia port of Kismayu on Tuesday.

Withdrawal of the Indian U.N. troops, the staff of the Belgian Agency Medicines Sans Frontieres (MSF) Doctors without Borders — said some inter-clan fighting broke out in the city centre Wednesday morning.

N. military spokesman for Zubair Chattha said three ships would provide sea support for the drawal of the Indian troops. The Indian navy is expected to be completely late on Wednesday.

smayu, the gateway to fertile south is widely by U.N. officials to be a flashpoint for renewed war as the 15,000-strong force in Somalia pulls before the end of March.

Indian U.N. troops have already withdrawn from Kismayu city centre to the sea-port and on Tuesday handed over the airport control tower and landing strip to the new-

ly-formed district council. A total of 150 Indian troops left Kismayu by air on Tuesday.

Possession of the air and sea ports is disputed by Marehan and Harte clans. Tension between them was reported to be high.

MSF spokesman Jo Robays told Reuters his Somali staff in Kismayu had reported renewed fighting on Wednesday morning and said two wounded gunmen were admitted to the MSF-hospital.

"It appears the fighting has started even before the Indians have gone," said Mr. Robays, who left Kismayu late on Tuesday. All other international aid workers have quit the city because of fears the Indian withdrawal would trigger renewed clashes.

Two Bangladeshi U.N. soldiers and a number of Somalis were wounded on Tuesday when U.N. peacekeepers fought their way out of the town of Afgoye with tanks and helicopter gunships

laying down covering fire to hold off attacking Somali gunmen.

Shooting broke out after gunmen demanded the United Nations pay rent before its forces left a riverside camp, which they had occupied for two years of foreign military intervention.

Gunmen from the Mursade and Abgal clans clashed in the Medina district of the Somali capital Mogadishu on Tuesday and witnesses said two gunmen were killed and five wounded.

They said Mursade militiamen fired on an Abgal "technical" battlewagon moving near their defensive positions on Tuesday and fighting continued through the night.

Hundreds of local residents were fleeing the area, which has been hit by intermittent inter-clan fighting since September.

The Egyptian ambassador to Somalia visited warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed at his Mogadishu headquarters on Tuesday.



QATARI COMMANDER: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Wednesday receives at the Royal Court the commander of the Qatari Air Force, Colonel Ahmad Al Kawwari. Prince Hassan and Col. Kawwari reviewed scopes

of cooperation between Jordan and Qatar as well as issues of common interest. The meeting was attended by Commander of the Royal Air Force Brigadier Mohammad Al Qudus and the Crown Prince's military secretary (Petra photo)

Sudanese troops repulse rebel attack on Kapoeta

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudanese government troops have repulsed a rebel assault aimed at recapturing an important southern town, a military spokesman said.

Brigadier Mohammad Bashir Suleiman said in a statement late Tuesday that Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) rebels attacked Kapoeta, capital of eastern equatoria state, on Monday night.

They were beaten back, he said, describing the action as suicidal and desperate.

Brig. Suleiman said the SPLA had been trying to

recapture Kapoeta, which they lost in 1992, for sometime but this was the government's first confirmation of fighting there.

On Monday a Sudanese general said government assaults and factional fighting have broken the back of the rebels, rendering them ineffective as a fighting force.

The SPLA, which draws most of its support from the predominantly Christian and animist southern Sudanese, has been fighting against what it sees as domination by the Arabised and Muslim north since 1983.

Brig. Suleiman said after the failed attack on Kapoeta the rebels fled, leaving behind five vehicles loaded with ammunition as well as artillery pieces, who radio transmitters and other weapons. He gave no details on casualties on either side.

Last week the SPLA said the town was virtually in its hands. Kapoeta lies about 60 km from the Kenyan border and is a centre for mining and cattle-rearing.

Government forces recaptured it from the SPLA in May 1992 during a big army offensive which also saw the

fall of 14 other towns and villages.

Regional commander Major General Hussein Abdulrahman Jibril told a government newspaper in remarks printed on Monday that large parts of the Bahr Al Ghazal region in the south were stabilised under government control.

In recent months there have been few SPLA-government battles in Bahr Al Ghazal while clashes between rival SPLA factions have been frequent, Gen. Jibril said.

Donors pledge \$135.4 m for UNRWA in 1995

NEW YORK — Pledges totalling \$135.4 million were announced Tuesday for the 1995 programmes of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which provides educational service food aid, medical services, relief and social services to the Palestinian people, the U.N. department of Information announced Wednesday.

At a meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the announcement of voluntary contributions to UNRWA, announcements of contributions and support were made by 32 countries, as well as the European Commission and the Holy See. The largest pledges were made by the United States (\$55 million), the European Commission (\$40 million), Denmark (\$10.7 million), Switzerland

(\$7.5 million), Germany (\$6.35 million), and the Netherlands (\$5.14 million). Austria, Finland, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom announced their intention to pledge at a later date, the U.N. said.

At the start of the meeting, the president of the general assembly, Amr Essy from Cote d'Ivoire, said the agency symbolised the intention of the international community to provide assistance to the Palestinian refugees. Stressing that the needs of the refugees remained vital, he called on governments to be generous in their assistance. The pledges made at the meeting represented a great contribution to the cause of peace and would provide assistance to the refugees until a lasting and just peace was found, he said.

Iran, Qatar want closer ties

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Iran's president said Wednesday that his country's good ties with Qatar were a model for other Gulf countries to follow. Tehran Radio reported.

The broadcast quoted Hashemi Rafsanjani as saying in a meeting in Tehran with Qatar's Defence Minister Sheikh Hamad Bin Abdullah Bin Khalid Al Thani, that Iran's foreign policy called for expansion of relations with all countries, especially those in the Gulf.

The radio, monitored in Cyprus, quoted him as saying that better ties among Gulf countries would result in "unity and common views and the establishment of peace and stability in this strategic region."

He said ties and cooperation between Iran and Qatar could serve "as a model for other countries" in the region.

Iran has long been lobbying for an Arab-Iranian security force for the Gulf and has called for joint military exercises with other Gulf countries.

But its efforts have so far met with little enthusiasm among its Arab partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain.

Qatar, which is locked in territorial disputes with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, has been pursuing a foreign policy increasingly independent of its Gulf Arab allies.

PNA issues first stamp

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AFP) — The Palestinian self-rule authority has issued its own postage for local use and hopes to make them international in 1995, the communications "minister" said Wednesday.

The stamps, which depict Jerusalem's holy Muslim and Christian sites as well as the Palestinian flag, are for use only within the autonomous Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

They bear the name "The Palestinian Authority." Abdul Hafiz Al Ashhab, the Palestinian communications "minister," said he requested membership to the International Postal Union about a month ago.

"We will then be able to use our stamps all over the world," he told AFP, adding that he expected an answer early next year.

Two-thirds of the union's members would have to approve the move. He said the authority has ordered a second batch of stamps, which include revenue stamps for use on official documents.

Germany, which printed the stamps, has also kept some to sell as collector's items to cover production costs, Mr. Ashhab said.

Mr. Ashhab said the first batch mistakenly appeared in "milliemes," or one thousandth of the Palestinian pound, the currency used during the British mandate of Palestine.

But they are sold for between half a shekel and 10 shekels (17 U.S. cents to \$3.3).

The next batch would be corrected to "dinars," or thousandths of a dinar, the currency when the West Bank and East Jerusalem were part of Jordan, Mr. Ashhab said.

After the establishment of a Palestinian monetary authority, the currency would again be in "milliemes."

Afghan factions fail to agree on ceasefire

TEHRAN (AFP) — Representatives of rival Afghan factions failed to reach a ceasefire accord after a week of talks here, an Iranian foreign ministry official said Wednesday.

The Afghan delegations "stressed the need to establish a ceasefire" but failed to agree on a date or precise arrangements for one, Mr. Mahmud Mussavi told a news conference.

Mr. Mussavi headed the Iranian delegation to the talks, which opened at the foreign ministry on Nov. 29. Representatives from the United Nations and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) were also present at the OIC-sponsored talks in the Iranian capital.

The OIC said from its Jeddah headquarters on Sunday that the rival factions had agreed in principle to a ceasefire starting of the year.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19
PROGRAMME TWO
17:00 Tao-Tao
17:30 Film: "Gubriel"
18:00 News in French
18:30 N.B.A.
18:45 Planete En Equation
19:00 The Road to Avonlea
19:15 Toquillo and Bonetti
19:30 News in English
19:45 "Losing Track"
19:59 The Investigator

PRAYER TIMES

04:56 Fajr
06:18 (Sunrise) Duha
11:27 Dhuhr
14:13 Asr
16:36 Maghreb
17:58 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625341.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrenceau Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625341.
Anglican Church Tel. 630851. Tel. 625343.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775251.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be sunny with temperatures rising further, but remaining slightly below average. Winds will be southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min/Max. temp.
Amman -1 / 12
Aqaba 5 / 20
Deserts -3 / 13
Jordan Valley 2 / 18

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 9, Aqaba 18, Humidity readings: Amman 55 per cent, Aqaba 30 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Hisham Kan'an 790286
Dr. Jamal Jbarah 847351
Dr. Walid Al Maari 675485
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad 940770
Firdos pharmacy 661912
Fardows pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Najmouk pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmiciani pharmacy 637660
Najm pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Oanu (—)
Alquda pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Randa Shabie 995710
Khalid pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Fire Brigade 192, 621111, 637777
Rescue Police 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 602800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 6641546
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints 787111
Telephone assistance 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Akilch Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642562
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmiciani 664171/4
Queen Alia Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845945
Al-Musasher Hospital 66727/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641546
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/30
Amal Hospital 674135

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)980732
Jin Sina Hospital (09)900560
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)949094

IRBID:
Princess Basmah Hospital (02)755555
Groch Catholic Hospital (02)727275
Jin Al-Nafous Hospital (02)347100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)532005, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:00 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
06:45 Sanaa, Aden (RJ)
07:20 Sanaa (RJ)
07:50 Amman (RJ)
08:15 Riyadh (RJ)
09:00 New Delhi (RJ)
09:55 Beirut (RJ)
10:25 Colombo (RJ)
11:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
11:00 Cairo, Aqaba (RJ)
11:25 London, Berlin (RJ)
11:50 Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)
12:15 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
12:15 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)

20:00 Rome (RJ)
20:35 Athens, Larnaca (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:20 Cairo (add) (AF)
11:45 Doha (O7)
12:40 Sharqah (AH)
13:00 Riyadh (SV)
16:15 Dufai (AF)
17:50 Fars, Damascus (AF)
20:05 Cairo (MS)
20:20 Beirut (ME)
22:55 Istanbul (TK)
01:10 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:45 Beirut (RJ)
07:00 Amman (RJ)
07:40 Abu Dhabi, Aqaba (RJ)
08:15 Amman (RJ)
11:00 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:55 Rome (RJ)
12:00 London (RJ)
12:40 Athens (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
13:00 Jeddah (RJ)
21:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:25 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:10 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

08:15 Beirut (ME)
12:15 London (70)
13:30 Sharqah (AH)

14:00 Riyadh (SV)
17:15 Dubai (EK)
21:00 Cairo (MS)
02:20 Amsterdam (KL)

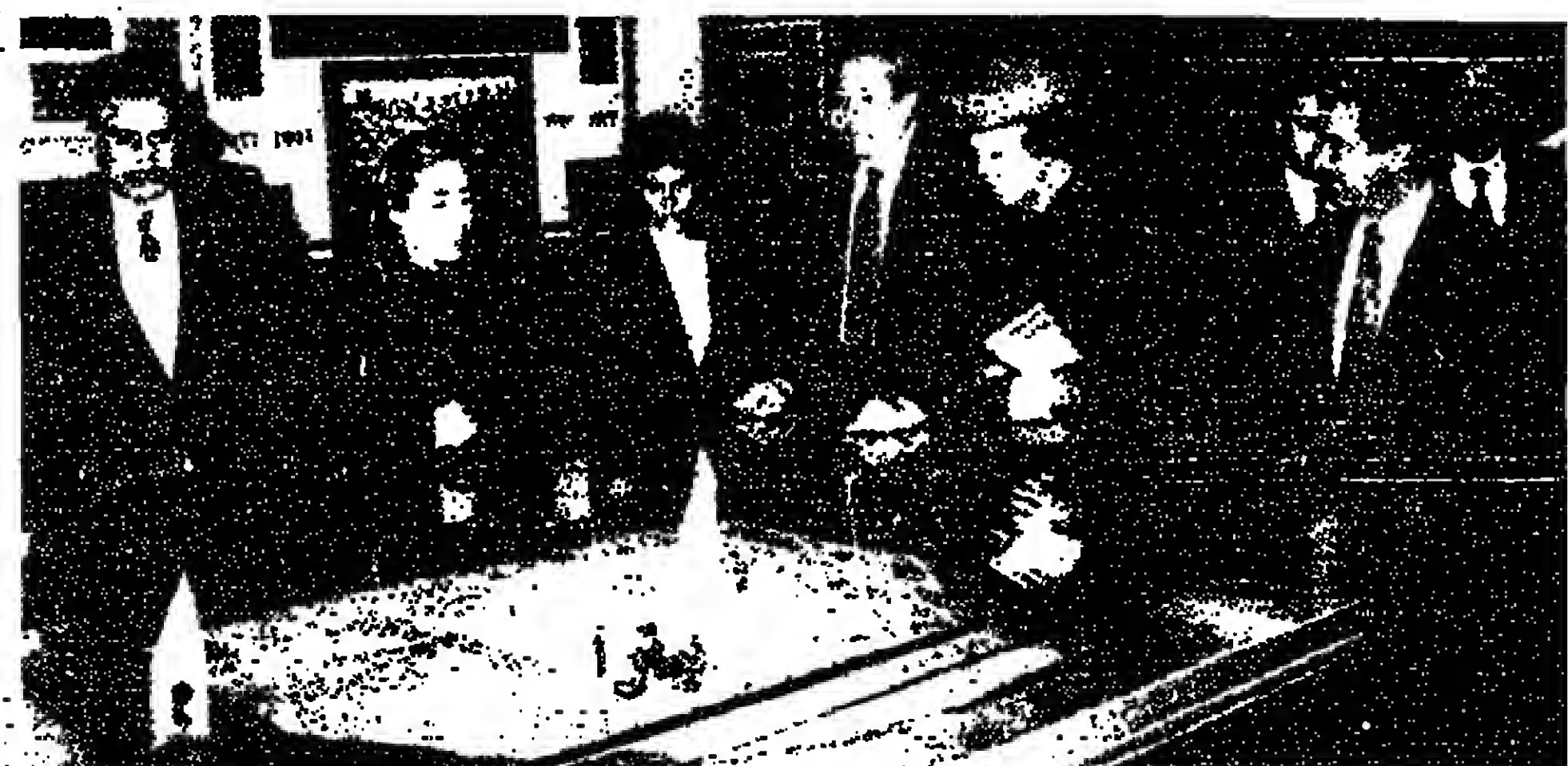
HIAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

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Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Amman 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Damascus 3:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in this per kg.

Apple 700 / 500
Banana 600
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Cabbage 180 / 100
Carrot 320 / 200
Cauliflower 340 / 200
Cucumber (large) 250 / 150
Cucumber (small) 300 / 150
Eggplant 280 / 180
Garlic 550 / 400
Grape Fruit 280 / 180
Lemon 320 / 220
Marrow (large) 200 / 150
Marrow (small) 360 / 240
Onion (green) 430 / 300
Onion (dry) 600 / 400
Orange 440 / 300
Pepper (hot) 240 / 160
Pepper (sweet) 340 / 200
Potato 240 / 160
Rudish 250 / 150
Spinach 300 / 200
Tomato 540 / 300



Her Majesty Queen Beatrix and His Royal Highness Prince Claus, accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya and Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Mohammad Adwan Wednesday view a scale model of the Byzantine church at Mount Nebo (Petra photo)

Queen Beatrix, Prince Claus visit Mount Nebo, APC plant

MADABA (Petra) — Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and her husband His Royal Highness Prince Claus Wednesday visited Mount Nebo west of Madaba accompanied by Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya Bint Al Hassan and the Dutch delegation.

Kheiriah Amr, of the Department of Antiquities, presented a briefing on the historical site and the ancient church dating back to the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Mohammad Adwan presented the Queen with a book on the mosaics of Jordan as well as a

silver ornament representing a traditional handicraft of the Kingdom.

Later, Princess Sumaya accompanied Queen Beatrix and Prince Claus on a tour of the Arab Potash Company (APC) plants near the southern tip of the Dead Sea, where they were received by Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Talal Ureikat as well as APC General Sulaiman Hawari and other officials.

The Queen was briefed on the first expansion project, which was inaugurated by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan last June, to boost by 400,000

tonnes the potash production in Jordan.

The APC now produces 1.8 million tonnes of potash annually as a result of the first expansion phase.

The second phase of expansion calls for raising the annual output to 2.2 million by the year 1998. The APC director explained the production process and marketing of the potash. Mr. Huwari presented Queen Beatrix with a replica of the ancient city of Petra and another representing the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem as well as samples of the potash produced at the plant.

'U.S. aid is not conditional upon Jordan's policies'

AMMAN (Petra) — Defending U.S. aid to Jordan, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Hassan said Wednesday that such aid has no strings attached.

Speaking in Parliament, the minister, replying to a query by Deputy Bassam Emoush on whether U.S. aid would be contingent upon signing a peace treaty with Israel, said Jordan, like other countries, has been receiving aid from the United States as well as from many other countries, but the U.S. aid has no conditions attached to it, nor does it affect the Kingdom's national policies.

Mr. Al Hassan said the aid that Jordan receives from Washington and other sources is well-utilised in a manner that serves the country's development schemes. Despite the limited assistance Jordan receives from

Washington, the Kingdom considers the United States as one of its major creditors, currently playing a vital role at the Paris and London clubs to helping Amman with debt relief, said the minister.

He said the government received no message that U.S. aid to the Kingdom would be contingent upon signing a peace treaty with Israel.

In response to why a gift of 50 tonnes of rice from the Ministry of Supply was not distributed to the needy, Minister Adel Qudab told the House that the rice, which was sold to restaurants, hotels and private citizens, came as a gift to his ministry and not to the Ministry of Social Development. He added that there was no law that allowed the minister to give the rice free to the public.

House calls for restraint in Chechenya conflict

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament Wednesday issued a statement expressing concern over the events in the Chechen republic and calling on all parties to refrain from actions that might trigger a conflict in the region.

The wave of democracy and freedom and right to self-determination are sweeping the world, and no force using iron and fire can stop any nation from securing freedom, said the statement.

The Russian Federation has granted many of its autonomous republics under the former Soviet Union the right to self-determination, and the Chechens should have no exception, but rather should have the same right as long as the majority desires independence, said the statement.

Forced annexation and the threat of the use of arms run contrary to the aspirations of people for freedom and democracy, and the military option can only damage the interests of all parties, continued the statement.

Stressing that problems can only be settled through dia-

logues and meetings at the negotiating table, the statement urged Russia and the Chechen republic to opt for reason and negotiations and avoid heavy losses in life and property.

The Lower House of Parliament supports the Chechens' right to self-determination and calls on the Russian Federation to deal with the Chechen republic in the same manner as it did with the other republics which chose independence.

Last week, the Chechen community in Jordan issued a statement in support of President Dzhokhar Dudayev and appealed to His Majesty King Hussein and the international community to uphold the freedom and independence of the Chechen republic in the face of what they called "Russian aggression."

Russian President Boris Yeltsin had issued an ultimatum to the Chechen republic to submit to Russian constitutional rule to avoid the imposition of the state of emergency and a possible Russian invasion.

Shekel makes entry on Jordanian market

AMMAN (AFP) — The Israeli shekel has entered the Jordanian exchange market but with only a limited demand so far, banking officials said Wednesday.

The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) on Monday authorised banks and dealers to trade in shekels in line with the October 26 Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

Branches of Jordanian banks on the crossing between the two countries have

started trading in the shekel, but demand was "still very limited," said Ayman Besh-tawi, from the Housing Bank branch in the northern crossing on the Jordan River.

One shekel was buying for JD 0.20 and selling for JD 0.23 Wednesday, he said.

Israelis entering Jordan usually buy between JD 50 to JD 100, while demand for the shekel is "almost nil" as few Jordanians go to Israel, he told AFP.

Ministry to award 2000 scholarships

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Higher Education has made available 2,000 scholarships for the 1994-95 academic year of students who passed the Tawjihi examinations in 1994, according to a senior ministry official Wednesday.

Nawaf Etaiwi, director of the Scholarships Department at the ministry, said the scholarships are for students in their freshman year at state universities, and will be granted during the second semester of the current academic year.

The scholarships will be

announced after the 1995 fiscal budget, Mr. Etaiwi said, adding that 20 per cent of the scholarships will be assigned to needy students whose families receive financial help from the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), the National Aid Fund (NAF) and the Zakat Fund.

A total of 50 scholarships will go to the children of government employees and nine will go to young women students from different governorates nominated by QAF, said the official.

The rest of the scholarships

will benefit the first ten men and first 10 women students in the literary and scientific streams of the Tawjihi examination, as well as 10 scholarships for the first ten in the industrial, commercial and nursing streams, five for the first five students in the agricultural stream and three for the hotel management stream.

Mr. Etaiwi said that six scholarships have been assigned to students nominated by the Scouts and Girl Guides associations and five to those excelling in sports, who will be nominated by the Jordan Olympic Committee.

3 sentenced to 13 years for raping 11-year-old

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Amman criminal court Tuesday sentenced three men, aged 27, 28 and 30, to 13 years in prison with hard labour for raping an 11-year-old girl on the Amman-Aqaba highway last spring, but defence attorneys said they will appeal the verdict at the Court of Cassation.

According to court papers, the family, which dropped charges against the three defendants received JD 15,000 from their families.

Court documents said that the three men each received a ten-year sentence for rape and an additional three years because the victim was a minor.

Court papers said that on March 20, 1994, Hakem Awad, Saleh Hall, and Suleiman Ali, picked up the victim, Amneh H. from the highway near Petra, and told her they would give her a ride to her home.

The court documents said

the three men took the girl to a deserted area and raped her several times, then released her.

The child was later picked up by police who found her wandering alone in Aqaba. The girl was said to tell the police about the incident.

Based on the victim's description, police apprehended one of the suspects who led them to the other two, court papers said.

Mohammad Kayed, the defence attorney, said his clients were appealing the verdict because of the contradictory testimonies of the victim.

"The testimony and facts the girl told police do not match her testimonies in the court," Mr. Kayed said.

Woman found murdered

Meanwhile, police are searching for a suspect in connection with the mysterious death of a 42-year-old woman who was found stabbed in an apartment in Al Rawdah Housing Complex Tuesday morning, a

police official said. Criminal investigators who examined the body of Su'ad Farid Yousef, who was believed to be alone in the apartment at the time of the incident, said that the victim received one stab to the head, two stabs in the neck, and several stabs in different parts of her body.

The victim, a mother of three, married for the second time, lived in an apartment with her second husband's sister. Her husband and her children live in Saudi Arabia, according to sources. The woman's body was discovered by relatives Tuesday.

Preliminary investigations indicate that this is a case of premeditated murder, according to sources. There were no confirmed reports of anything missing from the apartment, the source added.

"All I can say at this time is that we are still investigating the murder, and if we find a suspect we will inform the press," one official told the Jordan Times.

World Bank urges immediate action to save region's environment

By Cathy King
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An environmental strategy could, in 10 years, save the Middle East and North Africa region billions of dollars, but only if action begins now, says a World Bank report.

The World Bank Wednesday called for immediate action to confront the environmental crisis in the Arab World and said it would consider increasing its regional lending for environmental projects to \$1 billion annually.

In a half-day symposium on "an environment strategy for the Middle East and North Africa" at the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) yesterday, Division Chief of the World Bank's Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region Anana Seth said that neglect of the environment currently costs the region \$12.1 billion a year, almost three per cent of its annual gross domestic product (GDP).

"Conservative estimates show water and air pollution, together with land degradation, are now costing Arab states more than \$10 billion a year or about 3% of GDP... and health costs alone of pollution-related diseases account for well over half of that total," said Mr. Seth.

During a technical presentation, chaired by RSCN President Anis Muasher and attended by around 50 people representing non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and

the academic community, Mr. Seth outlined the environment strategy as detailed in a 78-page report.

According to the report, about 45 million Arabs of the total 240 million inhabiting the region, live in cities with air pollution levels higher than those set down by World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines.

The report indicates that 95 million Arabs lack safe sanitation, while the water consumption levels of nine Arab countries outpace renewable water supplies.

Jordan and the Gaza Strip both use more than 100 per cent of their renewable water supplies, Mr. Seth said.

In addition the report writes that thousands of hectares of land are lost each year to desertification.

"Current environmental trends could be reversed if, over 10 years, \$58-78 billion or 1.3-1.8% of the regional GDP was invested in the environment," said Mr. Seth.

He said that there was a potential to mobilise \$40.7 billion of annual resources which could be released by phasing out energy and water subsidies, by taxing leaded gasoline and by imposing environment or "sin" taxes on high pollution emitters such as "dirty industries."

He gave the following strategy recommendations for the Middle East and North Africa: Strengthening the capacity of environment institutions and pub-

lic participation; intensifying the management of scarce natural resources; and the arrest of emerging pollution problems.

In a call for action, Mr. Seth urged Arab countries to urgently review their existing environmental strategies and set immediate priorities on institutional building, to seriously examine options to mobilise resources and public opinion for fighting natural resource scarcity and pollution.

He said that incentives for resource conservation and pollution control, including the gradual removal of subsidies on public utilities and agricultural inputs and introducing pollution charges should be implemented.

Investments, he added, should be directed towards ensuring water is safe for consumption and targeted at cleaning-up "hot spots," as identified in the report, and at the production of clean energy.

Mr. Seth also said that greater public awareness of the impact of pollution on public health was crucial to encourage consumer participation in solving environmental problems.

Although the World Bank had to be "dragged kicking and screaming" into the environment arena, it has, said Mr. Seth, since 1991 provided over \$1.8 billion to the countries of the Middle East and North Africa in loans and credits for projects with significant environment components.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

★ Film entitled "The Sword in the Stone" at the American Center on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

CHOIR

★ Choir concert at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS BAZAARS

★ Christmas bazaar (to include foodstuffs, handicrafts, Christmas shopping, and games) at Al Nijum Hall, near Martyr's Monument on Friday (9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.) (Tel. 682387).

★ The German Speaking Ladies Christmas bazaar at the Amman Marriott Hotel on Friday (11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.).

LECTURE

★ Lecture entitled "The Petra Ethnoarchaeological Project" by Dr. Steven Simms of Utah State University at the American Center for Oriental Research (ACOR) on Thursday 7:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of home furnishings and furniture entitled "Colours and Crafts" at Queen Alia Fund's new offices, Al Madina Al Munawara Street.

★ Exhibition of portraits by Fahrelnissa Zeid and the exhibition of contemporary Arab artist at Darat Al Funun.

★ Exhibition of oil paintings by Salman Abbas at Alla Art Gallery.

★ Exhibition of abstract by several artists at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.

★ Exhibition of paintings by Ismail and Tamam Shammout at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.

★ Exhibition of Muna Sandi's private collection of contemporary arts and Jordanian antiques at Abdoun Village (Tel. 829700).

★ Exhibition of paintings by Sadik Kwaish at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition by Akram Naji Shaker at Ab'ad Ari Gallery.

★ Exhibition of paintings by Dr. Ali Al Ghoul at the Italian Language Centre (Tel. 669348).

★ Exhibition by artists Lattif Al Khateeb and Muhy Khaleefa at the Housing Bank Gallery.

RCC to receive \$430,000 in new equipment from Japan

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) today (Thursday) will take delivery of \$430,000 worth of new audio and visual equipment which will be provided as part of a cultural grant aid programme presented by the Japanese government.

According to RCC Director Iyad Qattan, the grant is part of a Japanese government allocation in its budget

to support cultural centres and cultural activities worldwide.

He said that one major item will replace the 14-year-old, outdated audio machine at the centre.

Mr. Qattan added that another item, a complete studio set, should contribute greatly to the centre's musical and artistic activities.

Mr. Qattan said part of the grant went towards a video production system.

"I think this is the first time in the history of the centre we

have a complete set of equipment, and that would not have happened without the generous help of the Japanese government," Mr. Qattan told the Jordan Times.

According to the RCC director, a team of technicians arrived from Japan to supervise the installation of the equipment.

The Japanese Cultural Grant Programme aims at encouraging and enhancing artistic and cultural activities,

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Italy's 'clean hands' team vows to continue graft war

ROME (Agencies) — Investigators on Italy's "clean hands" team vowed Wednesday to continue their war on graft despite the bombshell resignation of Antonio Di Pietro, symbol of the country's anti-corruption drive.

But as a stunned nation digested news of Mr. Di Pietro's departure, many editorial writers said the magistrate's decision to hang up his robes could spell the end of Italy's long and tortured search for moral and political renewal.

"The sheriff has been disarmed. The cattle rustlers are rejoicing. It's party time again at the saloon," wrote Enzo Biagi, one of Italy's most respected political commentators.

Mr. Di Pietro, spearhead of almost three years of dogged inquiries that toppled a corrupt political old guard, announced his decision to leave the judiciary in an emotional letter Tuesday to Milan's Chief Prosecutor Francesco Saverio Borrelli.

The star of the city's clean hands pool of anti-graft magistrates and a national hero, said his work had become the target of a political tug-of-war.

"I feel used, taken advantage of... by those who want me against their enemy and by those that want to say that I have a non-existent political motive," he said.

Mr. Borrelli and Gerardo D'Ambrosio, coordinator of the pool, said investigations would not be lamed by Mr. Di Pietro's exit.

"This office has broad shoulders. It is very rich indeed in resources," Mr. Borrelli told Corriere della Sera newspaper. Mr. D'Ambrosio added: "We'll do everything to keep up the rhythm of the clean hands investigation."

Milan's magistrates have for months been locked in a battle with the government of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, himself under investigation for alleged corruption.

They are due later this month to question the media tycoon turned politician, who shot to power in March elections with promises to clean up Italy.

Mr. Berlusconi, who has accused the Milan pool of a political conspiracy to bring him down, said Tuesday Mr. Di Pietro's resignation left a "bitter taste."

But he also urged a return to "normality and balance in the administration of justice" after 34 months of headline-hogging probes that devastated an entire political class.

The prime minister's supporters say Mr. Di Pietro had simply had enough of being exploited by the left.

Opposition politicians said Mr. Di Pietro had been hounded out and they feared the Milan magistrates were losing a power struggle with the government.

Similar concerns peppered newspaper columns Wednesday.

Forattini, Italy's leading political cartoonist, summed up many views on the front page of La Repubblica news-

paper with a solid black square in place of his normal satirical sketch.

La Stampa leader writer Ezio Mauro commented: "Antonio Di Pietro sacrificed himself yesterday on the true, great Italian altar: The impossibility of change."

Mr. Di Pietro's resignation will not become fully effective until it has been considered by Italy's Superior Council of Magistrates (CSM), the judiciary's ruling body.

Politicians across the spectrum and President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, the CSM chairman and a former magistrate himself, have urged the crusading prosecutor to review his decision.

"A real magistrate wears his robes on his soul, not on his shoulders. I, in my very modest way, have never taken them off. He should not take his off even from his shoulders," Mr. Scalfaro said Tuesday night.

Mr. Di Pietro, a 44-year-old former policeman from Italy's poor south, appeared in a brief interview with La Repubblica to scotch strong speculation that he could now enter politics.

Repeated opinion polls have named him as the man Italians would most like to lead the country.

Mr. Di Pietro said previous remarks that he could return to his home village and take up farming were no joke. "I don't know what life has in store for me. I need a bit of time, then we'll see," he said.

Mr. Di Pietro stayed home

Wednesday as declarations of support continued to flood in reaction to news of his resignation.

Officials said Mr. Di Pietro stayed at his house in Bergamo, about 50 kilometres from Milan Wednesday along with his usual police escort.

But some of his associates at the Milan prosecutor's office said they hoped the judge would reconsider his decision and carry on with his anti-corruption crusade.

"We are waiting for him (...) and we hope he will change his mind," said one member of the prosecutor's office.

Mr. Di Pietro was expected at the courthouse Wednesday afternoon to deal with some unfinished business before going on vacation, judicial sources said.

They added that he has two months of vacation left before his resignation takes effect.

The daily Corriere della Sera speculated Wednesday that perhaps the judge would reconsider his decision after his vacation.

"Meanwhile, his resignation is on hold," the paper said.

But judicial sources insisted that legally the judge had not resigned since he did not send a letter to that effect to the high court.

The Corriere, which usually has access to reliable judicial information, said that the judge "had partially reconsidered his decision" following two phone calls from President Scalfaro.



Andorra in shock after truck tragedy

ANDORRA LA VIELLA (AFP) — The tiny Pyrenean principality of Andorra was in a state of shock Wednesday after a runaway truck scythed down shoppers in a crowded street before smashing into a restaurant, killing nine people and injuring around 50.

The 22-tonne French semi-trailer, carrying a load of sugar, ran amok after its brakes failed at the top of the main street of Escaldes, a suburb of the Andorran capital, during a public holiday. Among the dead were two drivers burned alive when their cars caught fire after the truck hit them. Casualties air-

lifted to hospitals in neighbouring France by helicopter were suffering from burns and severed limbs, and it was feared the death toll could rise. Truck driver Jean-François Pisan, 31, who was one of those taken to hospital, told a radio station: "I am not injured enough compared with all those people I have hurt."

Mr. Pisan confirmed that his brakes had failed, possibly because of overheating. Witnesses spoke of an explosion and people screaming. "It was horrific. There were dead

and wounded everywhere," said Eric Pradier, a buyer for the local shopping centre. A state of shock Wednesday after a runaway truck scythed down shoppers in a crowded street before smashing into a restaurant, killing nine people and injuring around 50.

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and wounded everywhere," said Eric Pradier, a buyer for the local shopping centre. A state of shock Wednesday after a runaway truck scythed down shoppers in a crowded street before smashing into a restaurant, killing nine people and injuring around 50.

The 22-tonne French semi-trailer, carrying a load of sugar, ran amok after its brakes failed at the top of the main street of Escaldes, a suburb of the Andorran capital, during a public holiday. Among the dead were two drivers burned alive when their cars caught fire after the truck hit them. Casualties air-

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Cambodian army captures rebel stronghold

PHNOM PENH (R) — Cambodian government troops have captured the strategically important Khmer Rouge guerrilla stronghold of Phnom Kulen in the northwest of the country, a senior government spokesman said Wednesday.

Information Ministry official Sieng Lapresse told a weekly news briefing that the army was reinforcing the mountain base to prevent the rebels from retaking it.

Mr. Lapresse, citing a Defence Ministry official, said Phnom Kulen, about 60 kilometres north of the provincial capital of Siem Reap, had been seized about two weeks ago.

There has been no independent confirmation of the government claim and no casualty figures given. However, if the report is true, it would result in much greater security for the province which is home to the ancient Angkor Temples, Cambodia's biggest tourist attraction.

Phnom Kulen is best known as the site from which the sandstone blocks were quarried to construct the ancient Angkor temples.

The small-scale operation involved about 400 government soldiers and 150 Khmer Rouge defectors.

Until its capture, the mountain had served as a base for an estimated 400 Khmer Rouge guerrillas, officials said.

In another development, Khmer Rouge guerrillas burnt down almost 150 houses in raids on two villages in the northwest province of Battambang earlier this month, the spokesman said, citing a report from a top Battambang official.

He added that a group of rebels had also infiltrated the province's Bavel district and harvested five or six hectares of rice fields belonging to local villagers.

The Cambodia daily Wednesday reported that more than 100 rebels had tried to destroy two key bridges 13 kilometres north of Battambang late Monday night, but had been repulsed by about 120 armed policemen.

The O-Taki Railroad Bridge and a road bridge, only 300 metres apart at one section of National Route Five, have both suffered damage in earlier rebel attacks.

Meanwhile, Renegade Cambodian government soldiers raided a restaurant in Thailand early Wednesday, killing two police officers and robbing customers and staff, a Thai official said here.

Clinton's friend pleads guilty in Whitewater case

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas (AFP) — A former top Justice Department official and friend of President Clinton pleaded guilty to mail fraud and tax evasion in an agreement with the Whitewater special prosecutor.

Webster Hubbell, formerly the associate attorney general, was the first administration official to admit to criminal activity in the wide-ranging probe known as Whitewater, which centred on a failed Arkansas real estate venture.

The agreement with special prosecutor Kenneth Starr calls for Mr. Hubbell to cooperate with investigators, who are continuing to look into the business activities of the Clintons and others in the state of Arkansas.

Mr. Hubbell was accused of overbilling clients at his Little Rock law firm — where Hillary Clinton was also a partner while her husband was governor — by some \$394,000 between 1989 and 1993, and underreporting his

taxable income.

The Rose Law Firm had ties to the failed savings institution, Madison Guaranty, that is at the heart of the investigation, but the charges against Mr. Hubbell were not directly related to the original Whitewater probe.

Prosecutors are seeking to determine whether funds from Madison Guaranty were diverted to Mr. Clinton for political campaigns or whether Mr. Clinton's administration interfered with the investigation in its early stages.

Mr. Clinton, who has denied any wrongdoing in the Whitewater case, said he was sorry about the indictment.

"Webb Hubbell is an old friend and Hillary and I were saddened by today's events," he said in a statement in Washington, adding it would be inappropriate to say any further because of the court case.

Mr. Clinton's lawyer said Mr. Hubbell's plea agreement had no effect on the president or first lady.

Study cites U.S. nuclear weapons plants flaws

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. nuclear weapons facilities in which dangerous plutonium is stored have flaws that pose safety and health risks, the Energy Department said in a study released Tuesday.

The study found 299 environmental, safety and health problems at 13 sites that were used to research and build nuclear weapons, and which with the end of the cold war serve mainly as storage facilities for unused and spent plutonium.

Rocky flats in Colorado, where a total of 26 tonnes of plutonium, the key ingredient of nuclear weapons, is stored, was ranked as the worst of the sites.

The study, begun in March, said the flaws at the ageing plants mostly pose a risk to plant workers, but could also harm the general public.

"These vulnerabilities have been caused by degradation in plutonium materials and packaging, and weaknesses in facilities and administrative controls that can result in inadvertent releases of plutonium that can expose workers and the public, or contaminate the environment," the study said.

Besides packaging that is inadequate for long-term use and "is often the only barrier that separates workers from plutonium," the study said the facilities have ageing safety systems and design flaws that weaken their ability to weather events such as fires or earthquakes.

"In addition to their impact on workers, such large-scale events have the potential to release plutonium that could affect the public and

the environment," the study said.

Tara O'Toole, Assistant Energy Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health, told a news briefing the chances of harm to the general public were remote however.

The plants' disuse also has caused problems with incomplete safety analyses, loss of experienced staff and operational problems such as maintenance backlogs.

The study said two rocky flats building that were more than 35 years old were the most vulnerable because of their flaws and the amounts of plutonium they hold.

Next in the ranking of vulnerable buildings were three sites at the Savannah River facility in South Carolina, followed by the Hanford Plutonium Finishing Plant in Washington.

The Energy Department said it will use the study to develop safety plans for the future disposal of the plutonium, adding that the decline of the facilities will only worsen "unless problems are addressed in an aggressive manner."

Ms. O'Toole said the department is in the process of repackaging plutonium in material that would be safe for 50 years. But she said the government still has not figured out how to dispose finally of the byproduct of the atomic age.

Hindu politician shot dead in India

NEW DELHI (Agencies) — Gunmen shot dead a right-wing Hindu politician as he stepped out from a car in the eastern Indian state of Bihar Wednesday, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

Srirang Rai, a local leader of the Hindu-revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), was shot in the head three times at close range near his home in the town of Buxar by unidentified assailants who managed to flee, the news agency said.

A lingering dispute over some farm land was reportedly behind the murder.

The BJP is the main opposition party in the Indian parliament.

Mr. Rai's shooting came three days after gunmen killed Bihar politician, Chotan Shukla, and four of his associates in Muzaffarnagar town, triggering mob violence in which a senior civil servant was stoned to death.

Bihar, which shares a border with Nepal, has the reputation of being India's most lawless state.

Indian police arrested a member of parliament and her husband after their high-caste political supporters stoned the senior civil servant to death.

They now head to the industrial German town of Essen for an end-of-year meeting facing strong pressure to make diplomatic headway on the issue.

"Bosnia will undoubtedly be overhanging the whole thing," said one EU diplomat. "The extent of our failure to stop the people murdering each other in the house next door has become more obvious."

The CSCE summit in Budapest ended with no more than a two-paragraph statement urging combatants in Bosnia to stop fighting and little more is likely to come from the EU summit.

The EU leaders are likely to concentrate on a plan to bring East European states slowly into the EU during their two-day summit. Leaders from six former Commu-

nist countries have been invited to lunch Saturday.

EU paymaster and summit host Germany, in particular, wants to secure its Eastern flank both politically and economically.

The EU leaders are therefore expected to agree a broad plan for eventually bringing Poland, Romania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Hungary into the Union.

It skirts, for now, a number of controversial issues including agricultural reform and an actual timetable for membership, but the plan is seen in EU circles as a firm commitment to bringing in the Easterners.

Opposition strike paralyses Bangladesh

DHAKA (AFP) — A general strike to demand the ouster of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and new elections brought Bangladesh to a standstill Wednesday and was marred by violence.

Several people received gunshot wounds in clashes between supporters and opponents of the strike, local authorities said.

Several crude bombs were set off. Shops, schools and most businesses and offices were shut, or operated with skeleton staff.

Pararmilitary Bangladesh Rifles troops and police stood by observing militants during the one day stoppage, which also hit the second city of Chittagong, where the main port did not operate.

In Dhaka, all vehicles except pedicabs remained off the streets and a large number of commuters walked to their offices. Thousands of people living in outlying vil-

lages walked home late Tuesday and took advantage of the strike to stay away from work.

Buses and railways came to a halt, although ferry services operated normally.

Some traffic returned to the streets during a four-hour break in the evening. The strike, originally scheduled to last 48 hours, was relaxed in response to appeals from business chiefs who warned of the growing impact of the political standoff on the economy.

One executive with a Western bank said "we are planning to expand services and unless the two sides settle down, it will be difficult."

However, the opposition faces a crucial test on their decision to boycott parliament for the past nine months when a High Court bench gives its verdict Sunday.

Anwar Hossain Khan filed

a writ in June accusing the opposition of not fulfilling election pledges to their constituents by boycotting parliament.

"It is a ridiculous case and we don't give much importance to it," Moudud Ahmad, a top lawyer and an MP of the opposition Jatiya Party (JP) told AFP.

He said he was one of the defendants in the case and if the verdict went against the opposition, they would immediately appeal to a higher court.

On Tuesday, three major opposition parties, the Awami League of Sheikh Hasina Wajed, the JP headed by deposed President Hussain Mohammad Ershad and the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami party warned that all 153 opposition MPs would resign en bloc from parliament on Dec. 28 unless their demand was met.

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Maltese Falcon sells for \$398,500

NEW YORK (R) — The Maltese Falcon, the most elusive and sought-after movie prop of all time, fetched \$398,500 at a Christie's sale of over 127 items of movie memorabilia that also included an Oscar won for Gone With The Wind. The sale total of \$1,301,358 was the highest ever made at an auction of film and television memorabilia. It took several minutes of intense bidding for Ronald Winston, chairman and president of the Manhattan jewellers Harry Winston, to win the legendary statue. A long-time fan of the film, Mr. Winston bought the Maltese Falcon because it fits in with his company's history. "We've always been the jeweller for the stars and the Academy Awards," said Mr. Winston. "I was very excited when I found it was available again. Right now I'm not sure whether or not we'll display it in our store." Dr. Gary Milan, a Los Angeles dentist, who bought the only other Maltese Falcon in the mid-1980s for less than \$20,000, said, "It is the single most important icon in movie history, truly representing the stuff that dreams are made of." The film based on the Dashiell Hammett novel used two falcons as props in the duel between Humphrey Bogart as private eye Sam Spade and a host of villains searching for the statue made of gold. The falcon is made of bronze patina on lead with cuts to the left of the head and shoulder — received when in the movie Sidney Greenstreet chips away at it to see if it is made of gold and then is dismayed to find it made of lead.

Swiss let cat out of the bag

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (AFP) — Postal workers dumping sacks of mail on a conveyor belt Tuesday found a fugitive kitten in one of the bags. The feline had jumped into a sack of mail that a government clerk in a town 60 kilometres away had put on a truck to be shipped to Lausanne. The six-month-old kitten was dumped onto a mail-sorting conveyor belt. It was later served a bowl of milk while the owner, who had broadcast an appeal over radio for the lost cat, was contacted.

San Francisco opera hit with scabies

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) — It began with scratching in the violin section. Then it spread to the brass and woodwinds. Four dozen members of the San Francisco Opera have been infected with scabies, an itchy, contagious skin disease caused by microscopic parasites that burrow in the skin. At least nine orchestra members have missed performances. On Monday, about 200 members of the company were given prescriptions for an anti-scabies lotion. The backstage area and hundreds of costumes were fumigated and old furniture believed to have housed the mites was thrown out. Opera spokesman Doug Allan said no spectators were infected. The problem first appeared last month. A viola player said musicians would frequently lay down their bows during performances to scratch. At least one performer was able to keep a sense of humour, someone posted a list of "possible additions to the repertoire," including "a little mite music" and "a mite-supper mite's cream."

Chinese alligators face birth control

BEIJING (R) — Artificial breeding has been so successful in propagating the once endangered Chinese alligator that scientists may have to implement birth control measures to limit their numbers, the Xinhua News Agency said Wednesday. Another method could be to turn older, extra animals into handbags, the agency said. The number of artificially bred Chinese alligators rose to 4,000 in 1993 from a mere handful a decade earlier. Last June saw another 1,500 members added to the family. "Using some older animals for 'commercial development' — possibly as shoes and handbags — may be one way to deal with the growing over-population problem," Xie Wanshu of the Research Centre for Breeding Alligators in Xuancheng in central Anhui province, told Xinhua. The Chinese alligator was native to the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River but its habitat was reduced by development.



A Bosnian government soldier instructs recruits how to aim and fire a rocket-propelled grenade from a rifle at a barracks in the Serb-besieged Bosnian capital (AFP photo)

U.K. government raises rates after tax defeat

LONDON (R) — Britain's government, struggling to repair damage inflicted by a stinging parliamentary defeat that punched a big hole in its budget, raised interest rates Wednesday in a move to steady the shaky pound.

The Bank of England announced it was raising rates by half a percentage point to 6.25 per cent. Prime Minister John Major now faces a huge task to shore up his weakening grip on the Conservative Party, humiliated by its defeat in Tuesday night's election in which 13 legislators deserted their government.

They torpedoed plans to double value-added tax (VAT) on home heating fuel, forcing Finance Minister Kenneth Clarke to scramble to repair his budget.

Financial markets had been expecting a rate rise to stem economic growth, which has threatened to set off renewed inflation, but

were surprised by the speed of the move following Tuesday's vote. Commercial banks followed suit by raising their base lending rates, but some leading mortgage lenders said they would not be passing on the increase. Shares and bonds rose as dealers approved of Mr. Clarke's firm stance of leadership.

The defeat has raised doubts Mr. Major's ability to soldier on at the head of a divided and demoralised party until the next general election, which must be held by mid-1997.

But the rate rise underlined that Mr. Major has no intention of resigning or calling an early general election.

"To keep the government in power, the parliamentary party must act as a party of government," Mr. Clarke told BBC Radio.

"Let's have a bit of common sense and less of this populism."

He was speaking hours after the House of Commons (lower house) carried an opposition Labour Party resolution against the VAT on fuel, a measure with which he had hoped would raise £1.5 billion (\$2.35 billion) in revenues.

Mr. Clarke is due to announce alternative measures to raise the cash Thursday, a humiliating process for a finance minister who announced his budget plans only last week.

Opposition leaders, delighted by an eight-vote majority against the widely derided measure, claimed it showed a dying, discredited administration.

"The government can't even get its own budget through," Labour leader Tony Blair said. "It is terminally incapable of asserting authority over its own party."

Paddy Ashdown, leader of the minority Liberal Democrats, said: "You have a party

which has lost the trust of its own organisation on the backbenches, lost the trust of the House of Commons and lost the ability to govern actively."

Right-wing Conservatives said the government brought about its own downfall in the vote by expelling eight members from the parliamentary party last week for defying it in a vote on Britain's contributions to the European Union budget.

Former Interior Minister Kenneth Baker described the move as "crass stupidity."

Seven of the eight expelled members failed to support the government in Tuesday night's vote, with one declaring that, but for the expulsion, he would have reluctantly obeyed the instructions of party business managers.

The expulsions mean the Conservatives have technically lost their overall majority in parliament, and further defeats could follow.

Mexico government manoeuvres to avert Chiapas conflict

TUXTLA GUTIERREZ, Mexico (AFP) — The government of Mexico's rebel Chiapas province is offered to stand down if rebels threatened renewed fighting if he is sworn Thursday.

Eduardo Robledo said in a television late Tuesday that he was prepared to give up governorship he won in August elections if the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) laid down its arms.

A shadowy guerrilla leader known as Subcomandante Marcos warned that the inauguration Thursday of Mr. Robledo, who won the election in Chiapas for the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), would end the peace between the EZLN and government forces.

The statement was issued Tuesday from rebel-held

territory in Aguascalientes, part of an area where Indian rebels staged a surprise uprising Jan. 1 to draw attention to poor living conditions and neglect from the government.

Comm. Marcos said the Zapatistas would recognise no governor other than Mario Vendano the candidate of the opposition Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) which claims the August polls were rigged. Comm. Marcos urged Mr. Vendano to form a "people's rebel government" in Chiapas.

The Mexican government meanwhile raced against the clock to avert a looming confrontation in Chiapas. The showdown is shaping up as an important first test for President Ernesto Zedillo who took office last week.

About 2,000 mostly indigenous Mexicans, heading calls

from the opposition Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and other groups, are converging on Tuxtla Gutierrez, the provincial capital to challenge the planned inauguration of the PRI candidate.

Mr. Robledo won the Aug. 21 gubernatorial elections, but the PRD denounced him as a "phenomenal fraud" who stole the race.

The PRD's candidate Mario Avendano has urged supporters to occupy the governor's palace, while the PRI has summoned its backers to rally at the palace.

The PRD anticipates that some 30,000 supporters will show up while the PRI expects some 60,000 for the inaugural ceremony.

Authorities are concerned that violence might flare between the two groups since a mock swearing in ceremony

for Mr. Avendano has been planned to coincide with Mr. Robledo's inauguration at Tuxtla Gutierrez central square.

The Interior Ministry announced Monday that it had reached an agreement with Mr. Avendano to "avoid any provocation" when Mr. Robledo is inaugurated. But no fundamental solution to the conflict was proposed and the ministry said only that the parties had agreed to "guarantee the tranquility and the peace, and to respect the rights of all who protest peacefully."

In Mexico City meanwhile, Mr. Zedillo told members of Congress he hoped to reach a negotiated settlement that would be an "honourable, just and definitive" solution to the problems in the impoverished southern state.

Clinton team: Cooperation with Congress possible

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — President Bill Clinton's top treasury secretary said the man named to replace him both said Wednesday that cooperation with the Republican Congress was possible, and not to count the president out.

"Let me tell you something about this president," said Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen, who announced Tuesday that he was stepping down to return to the private sector.

"He's a comeback fellow. He's done that time and time again. I've rode with (former President) Harry Truman in Texas in 1948, when I was running for reelection. His polls were 26 per cent — and he won that. So, don't count Bill Clinton out," Mr. Bentsen said in a television interview.

The loss of the politically experienced Bentsen was seen as a blow for Mr. Clinton, whose White House has been dominated by outsiders of young campaign aides.

Further, the Democratic Party suffered a massive setback in the midterm elections that cost it control of both the Senate and House of Representatives — making even less likely that Clinton administration proposals will give congressional scrutiny.

Robert Rubin, head of the National Economic Council, was nominated to replace Mr. Bentsen, said that Clinton was prepared to talk with Congress, but not to a point.

As he (Clinton) has said often, it is imperative that

we and the Congress work together, and he's prepared to do everything possible within the context of his principles to govern and to make sure that we continue on the track of facing the big issues that are going to affect the future of this country and deal with them effectively."

Both also predicted few changes in the Clinton team's economic policies.

"What we need to do is to weigh the relative needs with respect to further deficit — one thing we must do is stay on the track we're on," said Mr. Rubin.

Mr. Clinton defended his track record before moderate Democrats who blamed him for their mid-term election debacle, and called on them to work together to advance the party's programme.

Speaking late Tuesday at a dinner with the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), Mr. Clinton called on its members to "join me in the arena, not in the peanut gallery... and fight and roll up your sleeves and be willing to make a mistake now and again."

Mr. Clinton's extemporaneous remarks were partly directed to DLC Chairman Dave McCurdy, who earlier in the day called the president a "transitional figure" who had confused the public by pursuing a moderate and liberal agenda at the same time.

Mr. McCurdy's remarks reflected the bitterness of the Democrats' loss by both

houses of Congress to the Republicans, for the first time in 40 years, in the Nov. 8 mid-term elections. Mr. McCurdy himself was defeated in a Senate bid in Oklahoma.

In his defence, Mr. Clinton enumerated his accomplishments since he took office in January 1993, including reducing the deficit, increasing trade and job creation, all within the scope of the "New Democrat" agenda adopted five years ago by his party.

He complained that the Republicans were claiming as their own his efforts to cut the deficit, fight crime and reduce the size of the federal government.

If the Republicans want to do more... Let's have a partnership, let's have it," Mr. Clinton said, while imploring the Democrats not to "walk away from the fact that we started it and we intend to finish it."

To regain the ground lost in the past elections, he said, the Democrats needed to convince the working class that they stand to benefit from their political programme because it will lead to a smaller, less intrusive government and to more and better jobs.

Meanwhile House Republicans Tuesday voted to effectively shut down 28 congressional special interest groups, including the powerful Black Caucus, in an effort to show that business as usual in Washington was over.

"This is the year to decisively shrink the Congress," said incoming House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia

NATO seeks troop indications for U.N. pullout from Bosnia

BRUSSELS (R) — NATO decided Wednesday to ask member states how many troops they might be willing to contribute to any operation to pull U.N. peacekeeping forces out of Bosnia, NATO sources said.

"Military authorities have received permission to go out and ask countries to indicate their initial possibilities of contributing (to a pull-out enabling force)," one source said.

The sources said NATO ambassadors at their weekly meeting approved the request from the military authorities to go ahead with contingency planning for a possible withdrawal in hostile conditions of the 23,000 U.N. peacekeeping troops in Bosnia.

They said 20,000 to 25,000 troops would be required to undertake such an operation.

France has asked the United Nations and NATO to prepare a detailed plan to withdraw U.N. peacekeeping forces from former Yugoslavia, Foreign Minister Alain Juppe told the French National Assembly Wednesday.

Mr. Juppe said the situation of the peacekeepers had become "intenable" and "lack of determination by the international community" was forcing withdrawal.

The foreign minister said "the decision which we are being forced to take, for lack of determination by the international community, will engender war, that is to say more tragedy and more suffering for the people."

Mr. Juppe said it was "our duty" to ask the U.N. and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to prepare "a detailed withdrawal plan" for the peacekeepers. The French government had already made the request, he said.

Danish Foreign Minister Niels Helveg Petersen said Wednesday Denmark will pull its contingent out of the U.N. peacekeeping force in Bosnia if France and Britain carried out their threat to withdraw their peacekeepers.

"In case of a withdrawal (by Britain and France) the Danish blue helmets will also pull out. U.N. action would be thus halted completely," Mr. Petersen said at the end

of a meeting of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee here.

"If the blue helmets leave Bosnia, the civil war risks spreading to other regions," he said, adding that a withdrawal plan for the Danish troops could be drawn up quickly if necessary.

The Danish contingent, of around 50 personnel, is part of the United Nations Protection Force battalion of Nordic troops and medical staff which also comprises 1,000 Swedes and 500 Norwegians.

Last week Swedish Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallen warned that the Nordic contingent could be pulled out if fighting intensified.

Last Friday defence ministers from the countries comprising the Nordic battalion, meeting in Sweden, said they hoped the UNPROFOR troops would remain in Bosnia to avoid "a humanitarian disaster."

Bosnian Serbs Wednesday offered to hold new talks on a revision of a peace plan proposed by the international "contact group," an official statement issued in their stronghold in Pale said.

"We express readiness to immediately bring war to an end and open negotiations on the revision and the betterment of the plan to make the overall package acceptable," the statement added.

It said Bosnian Serbs heard "new interpretations" of the contact group plan under which further work on a map and definition of constitutional arrangements was possible.

The statement was issued at a press conference attended by Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and the Bosnian Serb parliamentary assembly's foreign affairs spokesman Aleksa Buha after their delegation held talks in Belgrade Monday.

Mr. Buha said there had been "approaches and initiatives from various directions."

"These were passed on by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic after talks in Belgrade Monday with the foreign ministers of Britain and France, Douglas Hurd and Alain Juppe, and in contacts with the co-presidents of the Geneva peace talks," Mr. Buha added.

Two bombs dropped in fresh Chechen air raid

GROZNY, Russia (Agencies) — Two Russian warplanes flew over the Chechen capital Grozny Wednesday and a local official said they had dropped two bombs outside the town.

The Chechen government official said the two planes were obviously aiming at a tank base near Grozny Airport some 10 kilometres south of the centre.

"They seem to have missed and the bombs fell on the nearby forest," the official said.

At least nine civilians have been killed in a series of air attacks on Grozny over the last week. Russia has acknowledged its planes carried out the attacks but insists they were never aimed at civilian sites.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin's Security Council Wednesday stepped up pressure on Chechnya, which declared independence from Moscow in 1991.

Illegal armed groups must be dismantled and wiped out in the rebel Republic of Chechnya, the Security Council declared Wednesday.

"Armed conflict with heavy losses must end quickly and all armed combatants made outlaws. At the same time, it is necessary to take all constitutional measures on disarmament and liquidation of illegal armed groups," the Security Council said in a statement carried by ITAR-TASS.

The statement also said that there was no "conflict between Chechnya and Russia. It's just a power struggle, carried out by illegal armed groups in this part of the Russian Federation."

The Security Council meeting also resulted in Nikolai Yegorov, the minister for nationalities, being promoted to deputy prime minister. He will coordinate the Russian government's attempts to restore constitutional order in Chechnya, the official said.

Mr. Yeltsin emerged after the meeting with his top security advisors and demanded "strict respect of the demands and laws of the Russian constitution concerning the liberty of citizens, order of society and an end to armed groups."

He also ordered an end to "religious and national hostility" in Chechnya, which unilaterally declared independence from the Russian Federation in 1991.

Defence Minister Pavel Grachev briefed Mr. Yeltsin's Security Council — normally including Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, counterintelligence chief Sergei Stepashin and Interior Minister Viktor Yerin — on his negotiations with Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev in southern Russia Tuesday.

The Russian parliament invited Mr. Dudayev to appear before deputies this week, Interfax reported Wednesday.

The invitation to Mr. Dudayev was the latest step in an apparently successful attempt to defuse the crisis between Moscow and the tiny Caucasus republic.

The motion to invite Mr. Dudayev and Chechen parliamentarians, introduced by a deputy from the rightwing Liberal Democratic Party, was overwhelmingly approved by 236 votes for, six against.

Seven Russian soldiers freed after being captured fighting alongside Chechen anti-Dudayev forces returned to Moscow earlier Wednesday, accompanied by the Russian deputies who negotiated their release.

Members of the delegation said three bodies of slain Russian fighters had also been brought back to Moscow.

Chechen authorities agreed Tuesday to release the last 14 of the Russians captured during a Chechen offensive on Grozny, the Chechen capital, 10 days ago.

The release was agreed at top-level negotiations conducted at Ordzhonikidzevskaya in southern Russian between Gen. Grachev and Mr. Dudayev, who proclaimed independence in his oil-rich republic in 1991.

President Yeltsin has threatened to send troops to restore order in Chechnya. Troops, including special forces from the Interior Ministry, have been deployed on Chechnya's western border to put pressure on the Dudayev regime.

Gorbachev weighs run for presidency in 1996

DUBAI (R) — Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev made clear Wednesday he wished to replace Boris Yeltsin as Russian president, possibly in 1996 elections.

"I pay a lot of attention to that subject and I cannot exclude that," he said when asked at a news conference about running in the country's 1996 polls.

Asked how he would differ from Mr. Yeltsin, he said: "You will learn that when I will be in his shoes."

Mr. Gorbachev, in the United Arab Emirates for a conference on information technology, resigned as president of the Soviet Union as it broke up in 1991, leaving Mr. Yeltsin as president of Russia.

Once allied to Mr. Yeltsin, Mr. Gorbachev has subsequently been sharply critical of his policies, which he said Wednesday were not "a continuation of my reforms."

He said new democratic reforms would underline his

programme and that he still adhered to principles he had promoted as Soviet leader, including freedom of choice and a mixed economy.

If Mr. Gorbachev did run, it is not at all clear he would win.

He remains deeply unpopular at home, not least among those Russians who remember his draconian anti-alcohol laws that have since been scrapped.

Some even yearn for a return to communism, but Mr. Gorbachev through an interpreter said: "I don't believe they are the people to whom the future of Russia belongs."

"I expect that extremist trends will be fading out in Russia, and I include in that Mr. (Vladimir) Zhirinovskiy and his ideas as well," referring to the Russian ultranationalist.

He said social democratic ideas were unlikely to win on their own, since history has shown that the Russians "like tough guys with tough ideas."

"But on the eve of the elections, there could be a union of social democratic sections of the political spectrum with liberal democratic sections and other centrists," he said.

Mr. Gorbachev renewed his offer to mediate, if requested, between Mr. Yeltsin and the separatist leader of Chechnya, General Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Russia has been on the brink of war with the Transcaucasian region which Mr. Dudayev declared independent in 1991. Mr. Gorbachev welcomed Tuesday's decision by the two sides to try to settle their dispute peacefully.

Concerning Bosnia, he said it was important for Russia and the United States, as well as the other members of the U.N. Security Council, to "reach a joint understanding of the problem."

Yeltsin sacks justice minister

Meanwhile, Russian President Boris Yeltsin Wednesday ousted Justice Minister Yuri Kalmykov, a presidential spokesman said, but a presidential order gave no reason for Mr. Kalmykov's departure and did not say who would replace him.

Mr. Kalmykov, 60, tendered his resignation in October, but Mr. Yeltsin delayed a final decision. Mr. Kalmykov, who has not been in the best of health, gave no reasons why he wanted to quit.

In November Mr. Yeltsin proposed him as a candidate to become a Constitutional Court judge but the Federation Council, parliament's upper house, rejected Mr. Kalmykov and several other Yeltsin candidates.

Mr. Yeltsin appointed Mr. Kalmykov an acting minister in April 1993 and confirmed him in the post in August,

Kaifu, Hata bid to lead Japan opposition party

TOKYO (R) — Former Japanese Prime Ministers Toshiki Kaifu and Tsutomu Hata, as well as the head of a small centrist party, declared themselves candidates Wednesday to lead the country's new unified opposition party.

New Frontier Party officials said maverick politician Ichiro Ozawa, mastermind of the grouping of nine opposition parties, was the only candidate for the number two post of secretary-general.

The surprise third entrant for the leadership post was Takashi Yonezawa, current chairman of the small Democratic Socialist Party.

Mr. Yonezawa is considered an outsider and the battle is likely to be between the two ex-premiers.

Mr. Kaifu was prime minister from 1989 to 1991 as a member of the long-

ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) which is now in government as a partner in Socialist Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's coalition.

Mr. Hata served for just two months as prime minister in mid-1994 before he was ousted by Mr. Murayama's coalition.

Some 300 parliamentarians from both the upper and lower house who have pledged themselves to the new party will vote for the new leader Thursday.

The New Frontier Party, or Shinshintou, will hold its inaugural convention Saturday to formally launch the second largest party in Japan's parliament behind the LDP.

The merger has been spurred by the introduction of a single-seat electoral system, enacted last month, which will work to the disadvantage

of smaller parties.

The new party group conservatives in Mr. Hata's Shinseito, young reformists in another ex-premier Morihiro Hosokawa's Japan New Party and Buddhist-backed politicians from Komeito.

Mr. Yonezawa's DSP is supported by a trade union while small splinter groups from the LDP, including Mr. Kaifu's faction, have also joined the opposition fold.

Meanwhile, popular support for the cabinet of Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama fell five percentage points from three months ago to 29 per cent, a newspaper poll published Wednesday showed.

The decline was blamed on public resentment towards a planned consumption tax rise, the poll said.

The Mainichi Shimbun conducted the survey from

Saturday to Monday, covering 4,000 eligible voters, with 72 per cent of them responding.

The disapproved rating stood at 25 per cent, up from 24 per cent in September poll, while 42 per cent of respondents said they were not interested in rating Mr. Murayama's cabinet, up four percentage points.

The public indifference rating was the highest since December 1991 when it stood at 43 per cent for the cabinet of Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, the daily said.

Asked to cite good points and bad points about Prime Minister Murayama, 29 per cent of respondents criticised tax reform, which will raise consumption tax from the current three per cent to five per cent from 1997, to cover a revenue shortfall from income tax cuts.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1973.

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Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

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Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

New name for old war

IT WAS inevitable that sooner or later Moscow would not see eye to eye with Washington in spite of all the efforts of the U.S. and other Western countries to come to the rescue of the Russian Federation economically or otherwise in the wake of the collapse of the former Soviet Union. The best evidence of this return to superpower rivalry was the just concluded Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

By all conservative estimates, the Budapest gathering was a big failure in its efforts to set new standards for settling European conflicts. Not only did the participants fail to agree on Bosnia, they also heard some nasty words addressed to U.S. President Clinton by none others than Russian President Boris Yeltsin. In a hitherto unknown harsh and blunt language, President Yeltsin told his U.S. counterpart not to deceive himself into believing that Moscow is no longer on the geo-political map. "I hope you (Clinton) clearly understand my words when I said that the destiny of the whole world must not be decided in one capital," were the stunning words the Russian President used to rebuke the U.S. for trying to dominate the international stage. This stance may have been prompted by NATO efforts to incorporate Eastern European nations, which Moscow views as unacceptable. In the background, there is of course the Bosnian conflict which is the other bone of contention between the two powers.

We have seen Moscow flex its political muscle elsewhere in the world, in direct competition with the West. Iraq is a case in point of where Moscow moved in an opposite direction from that dictated by Washington and its principal allies. Chechnya is another example.

It could be that Yeltsin, by taking this new line, is trying to bolster his position at home where he faces many challenges to his leadership. It is also possible that Moscow is genuinely concerned about being left out of the Western military club and become an easy prey to NATO at the end of the day. But whatever the reasons for the increased friction between Moscow and Washington, there are signs that the cold era that once dominated their relationships could now be replaced by a new rivalry whose rules and conditions are not clearly defined yet.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE PEACE treaty with Israel, signed on Oct. 26, remains weak and exposed to dangers from all sides unless provided with protection and backed financially to survive, according to Fahd Fanek, a writer in Al Ra'i daily Wednesday. When Jordan signed the peace treaty with Israel it was hoping that the western nations would promptly come to its side and support its endeavours by deeds rather than words; the Kingdom therefore did not place any conditions for concluding the treaty, because it would have looked as if it was asking for a bribe, the writer pointed out. He said that now that no meaningful help is forthcoming and the country's foreign debts are not written off, the Jordanian people are justified in feeling frustrated and bitter. Indeed, Europe, the United States and Japan have been seeking to establish peace in this region for a long time and therefore, said the writer, these influential powers are morally bound to come to the help of this country as soon as possible to show their satisfaction with the achievement of the treaty on the one hand and to give further impetus towards the establishment of a comprehensive peace on the other.

TAREQ MASARWEH, a writer in Al Ra'i daily, dwelt on the repercussions of the resignation of Deputy Premier Thouqan Hindawi echoing speculations about an imminent change of government. Any reshuffled or new government, he said, ought to give due attention to internal affairs which, he said, are in need of stricter control. The writer said that taking care of such issues as the economy, investments, administrative reforms and building strong relations with the other Arab states should be the main concern of this country in the new era. Referring to the outgoing minister, the writer said that the resignation of the Cabinet for the sole purpose of handling internal affairs. But, he said, that seemed impossible due to a variety of reasons and the inability of the Council of Ministers to work in unison in dealing with these matters. This, he added, has prompted Mr. Hindawi to resign and open the way for the desired change.

VIEW FROM ACADEMIA

What we do and what we say — two worlds we should set apart

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubelt

AMONG SOME of the more disturbing phenomena in today's Arab society is the wide discrepancy between what many of its members think they are and do and what they really are and truly do. The phenomenon, which may not seem obvious except to either those who reflect more seriously than others on the current "state" of Arab society or to those who compare it with other societies, is both quite widespread and multi-faceted.

The other day I was talking to a group of university students about cheating during exams, a bad habit in which many of them (as well as many of our students at schools) would indulge quite freely if given the chance. I asked them what they thought of cheating and I emphasised that I wanted them to be quite honest about it. They all condemned it as unethical, immoral and even taboo, some quoting the Prophet Mohammad's famous saying: "He who cheats is not one of us." They said all forms of cheating were bad, the blatant as well as the more subtle and innocent. Asking a student about a small point during an exam, looking at his/her answer sheet, copying from it or from the textbook are, they stressed, all despicable. A person who cheats is subversive and is not to be trusted or entrusted with any important job. What they said was firm, final, heartening and impressive. They sounded absolutely serious and absolutely sincere; some were so eloquent, I was really touched. If felt I was talking to a group of saints.

I then asked them, if that was what they felt, why they practised cheating when and if given the opportunity. Because they do. In a group of 30 students, 20 would quite automatically engage in cheating the minute the instructor turned his/her back to them or becomes momentarily engaged in some activity. They would look at each other's answer sheets, whisper answers and copy from textbooks. They would do it comfortably, easily, naturally, without any feelings of regret or remorse, without hesitation and in cold blood.

When I asked them why they themselves did it, they at first looked startled. Obviously, they could not deny the charge. They knew I knew. So then they started, not to admit the error and the guilt (as one would expect) but to justify why they would do it, as if what they had just said had nothing to do with the matter. They said it was really

harmless, they did not intend to cheat, how could an innocent look really matter, and what was wrong with asking a fellow student about a small point? Had I not been familiar with this situation for a long time, I would have been shocked. But I am well-acquainted with it and have become used to it, even though it greatly irritates me, neither do I condone it, nor do I allow it to happen in my classes (if I can help it) and I cannot stand those who attempt it.

Cheating, of course, is not an isolated phenomenon, even though it has its own peculiar causes; rather, it is part and parcel of a larger social phenomenon, perhaps even a social malady. Does not the scenario I have described above remind us, for instance, of the head of the family in our part of the world who, whenever the opportunity arises, lectures enthusiastically, devotedly and piously about the significance of the educational role of the parent, at a time when he does not give his own kids half an hour of his time which he lavishes freely on his buddies and favourite activities? Does it not apply to the mother who allows her children to loaf in the streets and alleys of eastern Amman from dawn to dusk amidst sewer dirt, dust and equally unguided and misguided peers? Does it not apply to the teacher who keeps reminding us of the nobleness of his calling and insisting on a raise but who devotes the least effort and attention to his students? And the mechanic, the civil servant, the weatherman?

The point here is not carelessness, lukewarm attitudes indifference or irresponsibility. It is not even a matter of double standards or hypocrisy. No. It is much more. What amazes me, as I have said, is the discrepancy, the gap, even the abyss between what one says, means, believes, insists upon and defends fiercely on the one hand, and what one does and practices on the other.

What I am attempting to illustrate and highlight here is a form of schizophrenia — in the non-technical sense of the word, which Webster's describes as "the presence of mutually contradictory or antagonistic parts or qualities." It is as if people live in two worlds which are disconnected, dichotomised and unrelated. When they are in the one, it looks real and true; when they are in the other, it also looks real and true. The two realities co-exist and one steps into

and out of the one and the other as freely and conveniently as one takes off a jacket and puts on another.

We inherit the problem from the culture at large. Here is how it happens, in my opinion. In our daily life, we are constantly told, preached, lectured at and exposed to the ideals which we all cherish: that the Arab family is supportive and harmonious, that the mother is the maker of men and destiny, that the father is the trustworthy guardian, that the teacher (as the famous line of poetry has it) is "almost a prophet," that the farmer is diligent and conscientious, that the public employee is the servant of the people, that we love duty, that we exercise our responsibilities admirably and ably, etc. The family tells us this, the neighbours tell us this, the teachers, the preachers, the TV, the radio, the poets, etc. tell us this. Such ideals, which are very appealing and noble, sink into our consciousness. They are drilled into us hourly and daily. They become part of us.

At the same time, the kids go out into the streets, we go out into the real world and the picture is different. The ideals are not there. People do what is convenient and easy for them. It is there, it is available, everybody does it. We cheat at school whenever we can, we do not have to sweat at our jobs (who cares after all?), we do not have to compete to be promoted, we do not have to perform well to be appreciated and valued. This is the way it is. Take it easy, "put your head among the heads of others," (the famous Arabic saying goes), forget it man, etc.

Daily and hourly, we experience these two realities separately and at times simultaneously. In either case, we have internalised both and accepted both.

This is a problem. The way out of it is, first, to become aware that there is a problem and to admit and confess it. Second, our society has to stress work, acts, deeds, performance, achievement, concrete results, tangible steps more than words, lectures and sermons. People have to be rewarded and valued for what they do, not what they say. Third, in bringing up children and educating students, we have to explain the difference, and make it sink in, between the ideals we wish to realise and the place where we stand. Let's not confuse what we think we are with what we truly are, what we say with what we do.

A friend to rely on

By Abba Eban

THERE IS good reason to believe that if a peace treaty is concluded between Israel and Syria, the United States will help provide an adequate monitoring system. To predict anything else is to believe that the new U.S. Congress leadership will be less supportive of Israel's security than its predecessors. There is no basis for this appraisal.

An attack of jitters whenever new leaders take responsibility in any sector of American power is a part of Israeli folklore. But there has been more continuity than vacillation in the conduct of American diplomacy. The decision of the Israeli electorate to give its government a mandate for innovation, compromise and peace has done more than anything else to consolidate the American-Israeli alliance.

Beyond the U.S.-Israeli relationship, the peace process has sent Israel's international prestige expanding right and left to include a widening sector of the Arab World. It will not be easy for Syria, Saudi Arabia and other Arab states to stay permanently outside the magnetic field. The Israeli opponents of the peace process are virtually suggesting that we give up the hope without being able to avoid the grief.

In the final resort, the probability that Israel and Syria will ultimately reach an agreement is greater than the likelihood of a return to the previous savage hostility.

If this prognosis is correct, the effort of a self-appointed Israeli lobby to undermine a common foreign policy aim of America and Israel is going to fail. Concentration on the marginal monitoring issue before a treaty is even in sight does no credit to the politicians and media who have developed this lopsided "priority."

The only certainty is that the U.S. is not engaged in a feverish rush to abandon success stories, and the multi-lateral force in Sinai is one of these.

Senator Dole would be more inclined to favour U.S. participation if it were within a U.N. framework. This should cause no difficulty for the Israeli negotiators, since this was the original intention of Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin in 1977-9.

The Egyptian-Israeli treaty does not contain a single word about "American troops." It does accord wide-ranging activities to a U.N. body that is forbidden to move out, except with the unanimous approval of all the permanent members of the Security Council (I have good personal reason to remember my description of U.N. force in Sinai in 1967 as "a fire brigade that runs away at the first whiff of smoke"). Although a hostile U.N.

rejected the Begin-Sadat invitation to carry out monitoring services for Egypt and Israel, the two leaders had recourse to a group of governments, headed by the U.S.

The multilateral force has worked for 14 years without sustaining casualties. U.S. legislators are not likely to be frightened by predictions of physical danger among personnel who would be welcome guests in Syria.

"In the final resort, the probability that Israel and Syria will ultimately reach an agreement is greater than the likelihood of a return to the previous savage hostility."

If Americans were apprehensive about such risks, the U.S. would be effectively renouncing any serious role in the world community.

The success of the multi-lateral force and observers in Sinai, with their delicate task of monitoring overflights, remind us that there is no validity in the platitudes about "a mere piece of paper" as against "concrete territorial assets."

The peace treaty as pioneered by Begin and Sadat did not leave us with a

mere "piece of paper," but with a subtle and sophisticated complex of balances, limitations of forces and intercommunication agreements.

These provisions, together with Israel's strategic power, could be a stronger assurance of non-aggression than the unrecognised "annexation" boundary. The allegedly ideal boundary of 1973 (similar to the present one) did more to invite war than to deter it.

Israel's interest is that all neighbouring states should be strong enough to resist aggression themselves — and vulnerable enough not to commit aggression against others. Syria fulfils this definition.

The Egyptian treaty reminds us that Menachem Begin has left Mr. Rabin with an embarrassing heritage.

Israel agreed at Camp David "to withdraw all its armed forces behind the international boundary" and, in the next breath, invited all the other parties to this dispute to be guided by the Egyptian parallel in their own peacemaking!

For obvious geographical reasons, Mr. Rabin and Foreign Minister Peres are striving for a more cautious commitment to Syria's Hafez Assad than Begin gave Sadat.

But those who participated in the drafting of the Camp David text are not morally in a position to assail our present government for grappling hard with the dilemmas that their predecessor left unresolved.

The writer is a former foreign minister. This article is reprinted from the Jerusalem Post.

Americans are setting their sights too high

By Anthony Lewis

BOSTON — "Why do we want to kill our presidents?" A doctor asked me that the other day, and left me wondering whether there is something about the American system, or the American psyche, that now makes the presidency a hopelessly vulnerable institution.

"With the exception of Reagan, who was sui generis," he said, "we have cut off every president for nearly 30 years: Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Bush. Now it looks as if the same will happen to Clinton. We don't just say they failed at this or that. We say they failed as human beings, and we seem to get satisfaction from that idea. There's almost a glee about it. 'Boy, he really was terrible.'"

With each of those presidents one can find at a fault that led to his undoing. Mr. Johnson dug the country into the disaster of Vietnam. Mr. Nixon was responsible for the lies and abuses of Watergate. And on and on.

Vietnam and Watergate, moreover, had lasting effects on the institution. Americans ceased to believe presidents, to assume their good faith. The press became hostile, and has remained so. It did not give Bill Clinton even a brief honeymoon.

President Clinton, too, has inflicted many wounds on himself. From Zoë Baird to Lani Guinier, from Bosnia to prayer in schools, he has repeatedly failed to stand on principle. But the doctor's point was that something larger is going on. Whatever the mistakes of this president or that, we Americans want to find

some fundamental, personal flaw in the man. Is that so?

What is undoubtedly true is that Americans expect far too much of their federal government nowadays. In a vast country, they think Washington can and should prevent local street crime. They expect it to repair family life, and make sure their incomes rise. And the president is the great symbol of national government. Americans lay on him almost the personal burdens that King Henry V felt the night before the battle of Agincourt in Shakespeare's play: "Upon the King! Let us our lives, our souls, our debts, our careful wives, our children and our sins lay on the King!"

At least since the New Deal, we Americans have had this romantic notion of what presidents ought to do for each of us. Asking for the impossible, we are bound to be disappointed. As in a failed romance, we turn bitterly on the one who has failed us. So the theory might go.

Now we are evidently returning to the pre-New Deal political system, congressional government. However much resolve Mr. Clinton can summon up, the legislative agenda is likely to be set by the newly dominant Republicans in Congress. It is there in Newt Gingrich's "Contract With America," and no one should doubt the seriousness of his intention to carry it out.

Will the planned Republican measures fulfill expectations? Mr. Gingrich has taken some welcome procedural steps, such as shaking up the House seniority system. But what about the nation's substan-

tive problems? The rise in illegitimate births, especially among teenagers, is one such problem. Will a denial of welfare benefits to illegitimate children — the idea being discussed by Republicans — solve the problem? Will poor teenage girls change their sexual habits if the government takes their babies away and puts them in Gingrich orphanages?

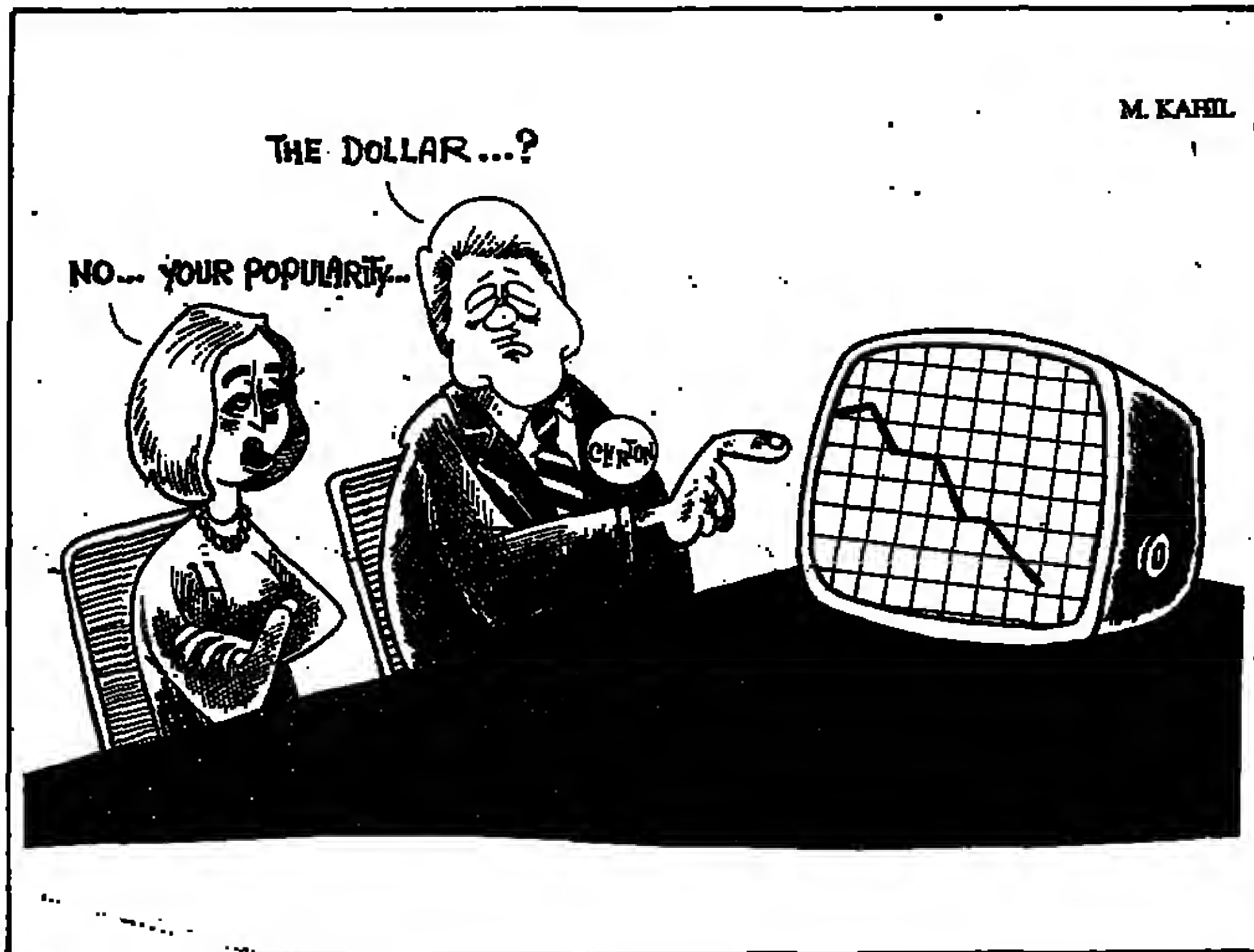
Or crime. Longer sentences and more prisons have not affected the level of crime noticeably so far. Will even more savage policies turn the growing population of young men without hope into good citizens?

The economy is the problem causing the most profound discontent. Real per capita income has been stagnant or declining for years. The rich have grown dramatically richer, while the middle class struggles to keep afloat.

Some of the Gingrich contract's economic ideas are appealing: The \$500 tax credit per child, for example. But the huge cost of the various proposed tax cuts would make the deficit balloon or require cuts in social security, Medicare and like entitlements on a similar scale. Will such a package ease frustrations?

The concern is not an idle or a partisan one. Frustrated expectations can exact a heavy cost in politics. They can turn people against the whole idea of representative government. Unless political leaders begin to talk honestly about the limits of what they can produce, the present cynicism and anger may become dangerous.

The New York Times



LETTERS

Memorable visit

To the Editor:

The royal visit of Her Majesty Queen Beatrix and His Royal Highness Prince Claus to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a day to remember. It was such a unique opportunity and honour to meet Their Majesties from the Netherlands.

Queen Beatrix took the time to meet the Dutch community in Amman, even though it is a small community. We were all so pleased with the warm welcome of the Dutch royal family and proud that our queen has such a terrific relation with His Majesty King Hussein.

It is heartwarming that Jordan and the Netherlands will have even closer economical and social ties.

We, the Dutch community in Jordan, want to thank His Majesty King Hussein and Her Majesty Queen Beatrix for this memorable event and wish them prosperity and health.

Mariette Al Hassan
on behalf of the Dutch
community in Amman.

مكتبة الملك الحسين

Weekender

Dec. 8, 1994

Published Every Thursday

To normalise or not, that is the question

By Mohammad Mashariga

In the midst of a controversy within the Jordanian cultural society over the so-called cultural and artistic normalisation with Israel in the peace era, some Islamists, leftists and pan-Arabists have succeeded in formulating a clear programme of action to confront normalisation.

Their 46-point short and long term programme, which was revealed by the former Islamist member of Parliament, Dr. Mohammad Abu Faris, covers all aspects of cultural and artistic life. The leftists and the pan-Arabists have obviously supported the Islamists-engineered programme and have pledged to put it into force.

In contrast, independent cultural groups and those among them who support the establishment's views were satisfied to announce that the Arab and Islamic culture is so deep-rooted in history that it would by no means be affected by the "non-original" and fairly new Israeli culture.

This group says there is no need for concern as "no one has the right to force us to interact with the Israeli culture," unless and until Israel has given up its racist policies.

In the view of this group, the on-going struggle is one between the Arab Islamic culture and that of the Western culture and ideology of which Israel is an inseparable part.

However, in both groups one finds elements that have a common denominator: That they should not succumb totally to the wishes of the Islamic movement in dealing with the challenges ahead. These elements group Marxists and liberals who have not yet succeeded in formulating a specific programme of their own concerning economic and political issues.

Iyad Qattan, director of the Royal Cultural Centre

(RCC), describes "liberalism" as not being a mere abstract concept but rather an expression of concrete materialistic interests connected with capitalism. But he notes that the group falling under this category is weak and loosely linked largely due to its inclusion of a number of personalities representing the government bureaucracy who had exploited their own position in public administration, and also elements representing the nomadic tribes. All these have become capitalist-oriented elements who do not favour change or modernisation, says Qattan.

Hisham Ghassib, professor of physics at the Princess Sarvath Technical College, believes that the Marxists in Jordan face a dilemma, namely the retreat of communism. "Indeed, the Communists had confined their ideology to mere slogans which concealed terrible backwardness. For a new start communism requires an overhaul of their whole structure, to be based on scientific foundation free of the shackles of the past."

AMMAN CULTURAL PULSE

Ghassib warns the secular groups against becoming mere followers of the "Islamic movement" since "experience has proved that the Islamists are quite ready to reach a compromise with the government over Islamic issues affecting personal freedoms, or on national questions like the peace treaty with Israel."

Thus we can see that we are dealing with individual intellectuals representing a certain trend but they are not grouped in an organised political party. They agree on a rational as well as a scientific and democratic course of action but differ over the concepts of future relations with Israel.

In Ghassib's view, Israeli culture is influenced by a

superstitious mentality, a far cry from that of the United States. Also being a mini-imperialistic state, Israel groups a variety of ethnic origins which are obvious in its heterogeneous society.

Warning of evil coming from the relations with Israel Ghassib cites the Jewish state's systematic destruction of the Palestinian social and economic structure over the past years.

He says that development requires huge funds and Jordan has no alternative in escaping from the looming Israeli economic and cultural threat except through turning towards its Arab nation to build up a national front.

He calls for the restructuring of Arab people's mentality "occasionally" rather than "Orientalism" which means selective absorption of Western culture, science and means for real progress.

Iyad Qattan, for his part, believes that Israel does not pose a challenge for Arabs because he says "we are used to being backward, scientifically, technically and culturally."

In his view there is neither an Islamic or pan-Arabist plan. "I am not in agreement with those who claim the existence of a conflict with Western culture and ideology, but I believe that differences do exist between progress and backwardness," he adds.

Qattan says he is not concerned over dealings with Israel whose technological progress could benefit the Arabs, but rather he is worried about the despotism of Arab dictatorships which cannot be trusted when it comes to the sustainability of any economic or political agreement with them.

Qattan adds: "As intellectuals, we ought to demand that regional blocs can only group democratic countries drawing on solid institutions."

Qattan is not afraid of the relations with Israel, expressing belief that Arabs would benefit in their



Hisham Ghassib

cultural and economic openness to and co-existence with others. Since the Israeli society is young and dynamic and rapidly developing as it adopts a variety of cultures, he adds, the Arabs stand to benefit from it in a general framework of democracy and pluralism.

SOCIETY ON THE MOVE

The weatherman did it

When the Arabic daily Al Dustour's "portrait" writer Ali Saadeh recently wrote a feature titled "The Republic of Dr. Abanda," who would have predicted that soon afterwards the country's chief "weatherman" would have been called on the floor by Jordan Television's Asaf Shobaki to defend a major forecast for last Saturday night of a heavy snowstorm that as it turned out hit areas in the north and south of the country but somehow missed Amman.

In the portrait, Saadeh wrote that Dr. Abanda is often the subject of "innocent" jokes and comments such as accusing Dr. Abanda of smuggling in low air pressures past the Customs Department and other concerned authorities.

As Dr. Abanda explained it, weather forecasts worldwide are 90 per cent accurate, and Jordan's meteorologists are almost at this level. He added that the policy of his department is to prepare the country for the worst case scenario because, as he put it, "if we do not issue a weather warning, the results could be catastrophic." Dr. Abanda, who according to Ali Saadeh, is all too often held personally accountable by the public for the actual weather and not just forecasts, said the public equates a snowstorm with a day off from work or school. "When a prediction such as that for Saturday evening does not materialise, people become angry and take their frustrations out on the weatherman," he said. Besides, as he says, Jordan is not only Amman. That is precisely what he was trying to make Shobaki, who himself is perceived by the public to be the country's snow newscaster, understand. Dr. Abanda's predictions of snowfall saw 1.5 metres in some southern areas, and 55 centimetres in Ajloun. The storm inexplicably was not as active over the capital, he said.

Meanwhile, Dr. Abanda said that Jordan Radio and Television Director General Ihsan Ramzi called him to apologise for the "clumsy approach and ignorance of meteorology" of the news programme's anchorman.

NOTHING TO DO BUT EAT: On the commercial side though, supermarkets registered high sales.

At Safeway supermarket, whose telephone hold system lulls callers with the American frontier-day tune Home On The Range, General Manager Azam Masri said there was a huge amount of customer traffic. "They (the customers) bought everything," he said, adding that the primary shopping was for groceries and secondary purchases were on all sorts of other items. "It seems people took advantage of the day-off on Saturday and did some extra shopping," said Masri. On the one hand Masri admitted that while "relying on the unreliable" weather forecast of the Meteorology Department Safeway's sale shot upwards this week, as a citizen he is critical of the department's "unstable" predictions. He said he suspects "people may have been sitting at home, and all they can do is eat," thus the "100 per cent increase in sales over the same three days of last December." "I count heavily on his (Dr. Abanda's) wrong forecasts, but as a regular citizen I expect my kids to go to school on time, and my wife has to suddenly come up with things to keep the children occupied if schools close." He hinted that she is not amused on such extraordinary days.

Abela General Manager Antoine Farghali said "the problem is that most people think that roads would be blocked, so they rush all at one time to stock up on food items." It happens every time, he said. At Abela, Farghali said, there was an unusually large number of customers, filling their shopping baskets with mostly foodstuffs. The store must have been well-stocked because Farghali said customers found what they needed, and there were no out of stock items.

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY: Over at Queen Alia International Airport (QALIA) Royal Jordanian Vice President in charge of passenger



services Samer Majali said that the primary reference for authorities at all three of the Kingdom's airports is indeed the Meteorology Department. As such, he said, the QALIA staff were prepared to implement their emergency plan in case the inclement weather predictions did prove correct. He said that on Saturday, all crew members operating evening flights were brought in earlier than usual and accommodated at the Alia Gateway Hotel nearby the airport so that the flight schedule that evening would not be disturbed. Majali, who is the eldest son of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, also said Royal Jordanian made arrangements to keep its evening shift of QALIA personnel on duty if they were unable to get home that night after their shifts. Although such precautions do result in additional costs, Majali said "we rather be safe than sorry." With no snow above or below Saturday night, there were only some minor delays, some unrelated to the weather, he said.

PERKS AND MORE PERKS: If you were wondering how our elected members of Parliament fared Saturday evening, Amra Hotel Acting General Manager Rafiq Al Salah said that on the night of the expected snowstorm, not one deputy was registered at the hotel which now accommodates Lower House of Parliament deputies at a discounted rate up to three days per week at Parliament's expense. In fact, he added that even under normal conditions not many deputies seem to avail themselves of the new job benefit. Salah said that on average only two or three deputies per week spend nights at the hotel. Although Parliament scheduled no general sessions for Sunday, committee meeting were in fact on the calendar — they were cancelled, however, on Sunday itself, said a Parliament official.

While it appears most deputies are taking less advantage of some of their benefits, others are ever-watchful of perks allotted to public officials. One tabloid reported earlier this week that Lower House Member Bassam Emoush has asked the prime minister for a full accounting (names of recipients and amounts paid to each) of the per diems paid out by the treasury to members of Parliament and the government taking junkets abroad.

According to the weekly paper, Deputy Emoush and other colleagues supporting his interest in "curbing the misuse of public funds" would like to see an amendment to the 1995 budget items wherein each ministry's allocation to its officials for expenses incurred on official visits abroad are itemised separately. Such separated, categorised and full disclosure, said the paper, "will deprive the 'higher

bureaucracy' from benefiting from these per diems" by eliminating the possibility of their being transferred to other areas of the fiscal budget.

A MYSTERY UNVEILED: While some deputies were busy doubting the issue of official per diems, others were more interested in the whereabouts of one popular parliamentarian, Ghor Deputy Jamil Hishoub. The mystery was supposedly cleared up by the Arabic weekly tabloid, Shihani, which announced to the Hishoub fans that their favourite MP had recently wed again and was on his third honeymoon. Describing the deputy as "in honey up to his head," Shihani wished the thrice-spoused deputy "the fourth," even though "three's a charm."

THE CHICKEN AND THE EGGS: If Shihani can describe Deputy Hishoub in cuisine terminology, it should come as no surprise that, recently, outspoken Deputy Abdul Munem Abu Zant, found no better way to describe the government than as a "chicken." In a debate over the trade balance of the Ministry of Supply, Sheikh Abu Zant was quoted as saying "the government is like a chicken eating from our house and laying eggs at the neighbour's." The deputy was said to be questioning the government's application of what he termed a "weird" equation. Shihani said that Sheikh Abu Zant asked how, if subsidies for food supplies four years ago exceeded JD 70 million and after all the increases in income, population, and the budget, could the subsidies now be reduced to half that amount.

'HAND' LANGUAGE IN THE CORRIDORS: Reporting still on the "sideshows" in the corridors of Parliament, Shihani said that the dialogue between Circassian Deputy Toujan Faisal and Aqaba Deputy Abdul Karim Kabarihi attracted attention because of the "hand" language both deputies were said to display. According to Shihani, one observer resolved the "mystery" of the deputies animated discussion, saying that Deputy Kabarihi's uncle were Circassian, meaning that blood relatives should be the last to fight among themselves.

CIGARS, CASTRO AND COURTESY: Yet another tabloid questioned Minister of Youth Fawwaz Abul Ghanam on why, when he was escorting the Qatari youth association delegation into the Parliament last week, he presented a Jordanian journalist standing nearby with "two Havana rockets (cigars) which, according to the paper, are smoked by Cuban President Fidel Castro. "Do you want them (the Qatari visitors) to say that journalists can be bribed with cigarettes and cause us a scandal?" the paper asked. Cigar aficionados here, see it differently. For them, offering a cigar to a cigar comrade is just simply being generous. And by the way, Castro smokes Cohibas.

WERE THE PRESS CARDS FELL: In an update on the status of ownership of Al Aswaq, Chairman of the Board Sufian Sartawi confirmed that a major portion of the limited shareholding company's stock is being purchased by a group of investors led by Zuhair Awatani, chairman of the board of Jordan Gulf Bank. Al Aswaq Editor-in-Chief Mustafa Abu Libdeh said that Awatani's venture into the company came with his belief that there is a good possibility to restructure the organisation and to invest in other media-related activities under the business daily's company name, Media Investment Company. According to Abu Libdeh, the intention of the shareholders was to make the newspaper the backbone of the company. Proposals for the future, he said, include establishing a permanent headquarters for the newspaper and the purchasing of a printing press. Abu Libdeh said the paper's priority now is to prove itself as the leading Arabic business daily in the area. With that goal as the main target, Abu Libdeh said enlargement of its

technical, editorial and financial divisions will be necessary to offer a wider service. He said that in the meantime, in order to shorten the lapse to the paper's break even point, subsidiary media related activities are planned. Included among them, said the chief editor, was the formation of a public policy forum to encourage dialogue, and starting a market polling business either as an in-house venture or in cooperation with international polling firms. He added that the company was also speaking with Jordan Television about preparing economic business programmes, similar to those that the Financial Times of London prepares, in addition to its own broadcasts, for major international television news organisations such as Cable News Network (CNN) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), to be broadcast in the region.

Abu Libdeh proudly says that he believes that Al Aswaq is the last newspaper to be produced as cheaply as it is, with only JD 300,000 of its JD 900,000 capital actually paid up. "But we can survive," says Abu Libdeh.

At Sawt Al Shaab, it was reported that shareholders there met last week and decided not to liquidate the primarily government-owned company. But Chairman Abdul Hay Majali was way out of town to comment on what that outcome actually means — whether the paper would still be seeking government support to keep it and its affiliated activities afloat, or whether private concerns and individuals were still seeking to buy the company out. Meanwhile the taxpayer continues to bail out Al Shaab with generous amounts of cash on daily basis.

THE POWER OF 6 FIGURES: Capital funds would appear to be a minor problem for the new London-based Arabic newspaper Al Salam (peace). According to Akhbar Al Usbou, Board Chairman Wafi Al Bishawi, the paper is offering whoever they select as the new paper's chief editor an annual salary of £200,000. While that figure is at least 20 times the annual take-home pay of most chief editors here, it is worthwhile noting that Jihad Khazen, chief editor of the well-established and well-funded Al Hayat Arabic daily (also London-based) is said to earn £22,000 per month. Bishawi was quoted as saying that the board is reviewing the qualifications of two candidates for the post: One an Egyptian national, the other a Jordanian. Al Salam is set to start printing in February and will be distributed in 40 countries, Akhbar Al Usbou reported. Meanwhile, Bishawi had his eye on a seat in the Amman Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, according to Shihani. But win or lose, Bishawi, an independent candidate for the chamber elections scheduled at the time of this printing, has invited all merchants who supported him, as well as those who did not, to a lunch at the Sahara Family Restaurant at the Jaber Centre in Amman from Dec. 6-11, according to ads he himself ran in some local newspapers.

COMING HOME: On a strictly mundane front, U.S. Ambassador to Jordan Wesley W. Egan and Ministry of Higher Education Secretary General Ahmad Husban today (Thursday) inaugurate the office of the Jordanian-American Commission for Educational Exchange (JACEE), also known as the Binational Fulbright Commission, in Shmeisani. Appointed last March as the commission's executive director, Alain McNamara, who had spent a total of 18 years working in Egypt, the U.S. and Jordan with AMIDEAST, said he "looks forward to working with this new binational commission and expanding the scope and impact of programmes that will benefit both Jordan and the U.S. by finding new sources of support and new programme opportunities." McNamara and his wife, Katherine (Kathy) Sullivan, who years ago edited Abdul Hameed Shoman's autobiography, said they are delighted to be back in Jordan where they have maintained strong ties with friends made in the early 80s. "It's like coming home," said McNamara.

Jennifer Hamarnah

Fragile — move with care

By Jean-Claude Elias

The beauty of working with a computer is knowing the information that is entered and then saved on the hard disk is there for good. It is nice feeling that the system, usually, "plays for keeps."

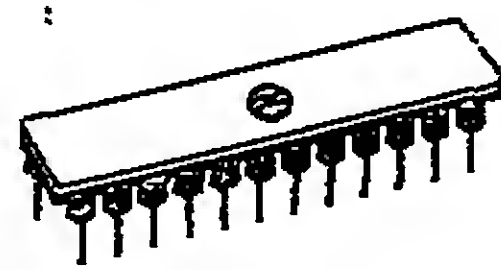
Being able to manipulate the same data over and over again, restructuring it, modifying it, adding to it, deleting from it or printing it out at any time, is an invaluable advantage. PC (personal computer) users however discover with time, that the data they entered via a given programme often needs to be used in other software or on other equipment. We can distinguish between three different cases.

In the first, and simplest one, users have to move, for the same programme, from one existing version, up to a new one. For instance, Microsoft best-selling Excel spreadsheet programme has shifted up from version 3.0 to 4.0 and then 5.0 in less than five years. Such a migration does not usually present any difficulty. A file prepared under Excel 4.0 will be read and processed by version 5.0 without any problem.

In the second case, the user needs to process a file created under a given programme in another one. The first could be WordPerfect and the second MS-Word (or vice-versa). Although developers include what they call "automatic conversion filters" in their software, intended to instantaneously translate data from one programme to another, the operation is not always simple nor fully successful. Sometimes characters' attributes (bold, underline, style, size) are lost, page formatting (margins, paragraphs) are changed and some additional work is required in order to put data back in its original shape. Most people however agree that this is still much more convenient than re-doing the work from scratch.

Always in the second case, and more particularly in the bilingual environment, Arabic information processed with Nafitha, an Arabisation system that works under MS-DOS, is to be exported to Windows, that uses a completely different Arabic coding

chip talk



system than Nafitha. Although Windows has built-in utilities for this purpose, I know for having used them, they only work with 90 to 95 per cent accuracy, in addition to being reserved for advanced users or professionals.

In the third case, data must be moved from one system to another, typically from a Macintosh to an IBM-compatible. Here again, designers have taken the users' needs into consideration and provide conversion tools. Some are automatic, transparent, allowing one operator to take a diskette processed on an IBM system and simply read it on the Mac. In other cases they require additional, manual operating. Here again, the accuracy is not always 100 per cent.

Whatever the case, it is strongly recommended, before undertaking any data conversion operation, whether simple or complex, to make a back up copy of the original files to convert, and use only the copy for the attempted conversion. If anything goes wrong — remember Murphy's Law — one can always go back to the original.

There is a growing need for data migration and conversion between users, machines, and different programmes versions. Software designers should take special care of this aspect in personal computing, and make it quick, easy and reliable. Only then should they be allowed to use the term "user-friendly."

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

CURIOUS SUPERSTITIONS

WHITE: White is the colour of coffins, vermins (which leave the tombs at night to suck the sleepers' blood and colour them red), jinnis and moon. The colour does not herald any good.

TWO: Had two calamities once occurred, a third would have accordingly been expected. As for happy occasions, the occurrence of two will not make it necessary for the third to take place.

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC FAMILIAR EXPRESSIONS

- He committed an ugly crime. *Irtakaba jareematan shanee'a.*
- God bless you. *Baaraka-lahu feek.*
- Our house is situated in a blind alley. *Manzilona fee ziqaq masdood.*
- His sight made my blood creep. *Manzaroho az'ajani.*
- He bit his fingers with regret. *Ad'da asaabe'aho nadaman.*
- I can't bear that. *La astati' ann atahammal zalek.*
- Things are bad with him. *Howa fee osr.*
- Away, you swindler! *Okhroj min hona ayyohal-moh'tal.*
- Avoid doing evil. *Tajannah ash'shar.*
- What can I do? *Maza astati' ann al'al?*
- Don't interrupt me, please. *La toqaate'ony min fadlek.*

INVITATION TO LAUGHTER

★ AFTER his father's death, a Vietnamese put up an unpretentious tombstone on his grave with the inscription: "Here lies Ho Chi Tonko". It so happened that the son had a stroke at the side of the grave. Sensing his approaching end, he dragged himself on to the tombstone, and added under his father's name: "...and his son, Vassilo."

★ A MAN was invited somewhere. When he sat down the other guests, he pulled out a packet of cigarettes and offered one to his neighbour on the right.

- "Thank you, I don't smoke."
- He then turned to his neighbour on the left.
- "Thank you, I don't smoke either."
- His wife then whispered to him:
- "Why don't you offer one to the host?"
- "He does smoke," the man whispered in an even lower voice.

★ A PLANE passed over one of the African forests. "What's that animal?" said a cannibal child to his father.

- "It's a plane."
- "Could it be eaten?"
- "Yes, but like a coconut, it is the thing inside that could only be eaten."

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. What are agoraphobia, amnesia, aphasia and paranoia?
2. What is the difference between a herring, a bloater and a kipper?
3. In what countries do the following peoples dwell? — Ainus, Dyaks, Tamils, Bantus, Airdis, Masais, Maoris, Berbers, Bhuis, Swahilis.
4. What is the equivalent for the English "MR", in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Holland?

TODAY'S DISH

HANIM SALATA (MY LADY'S SALAD)

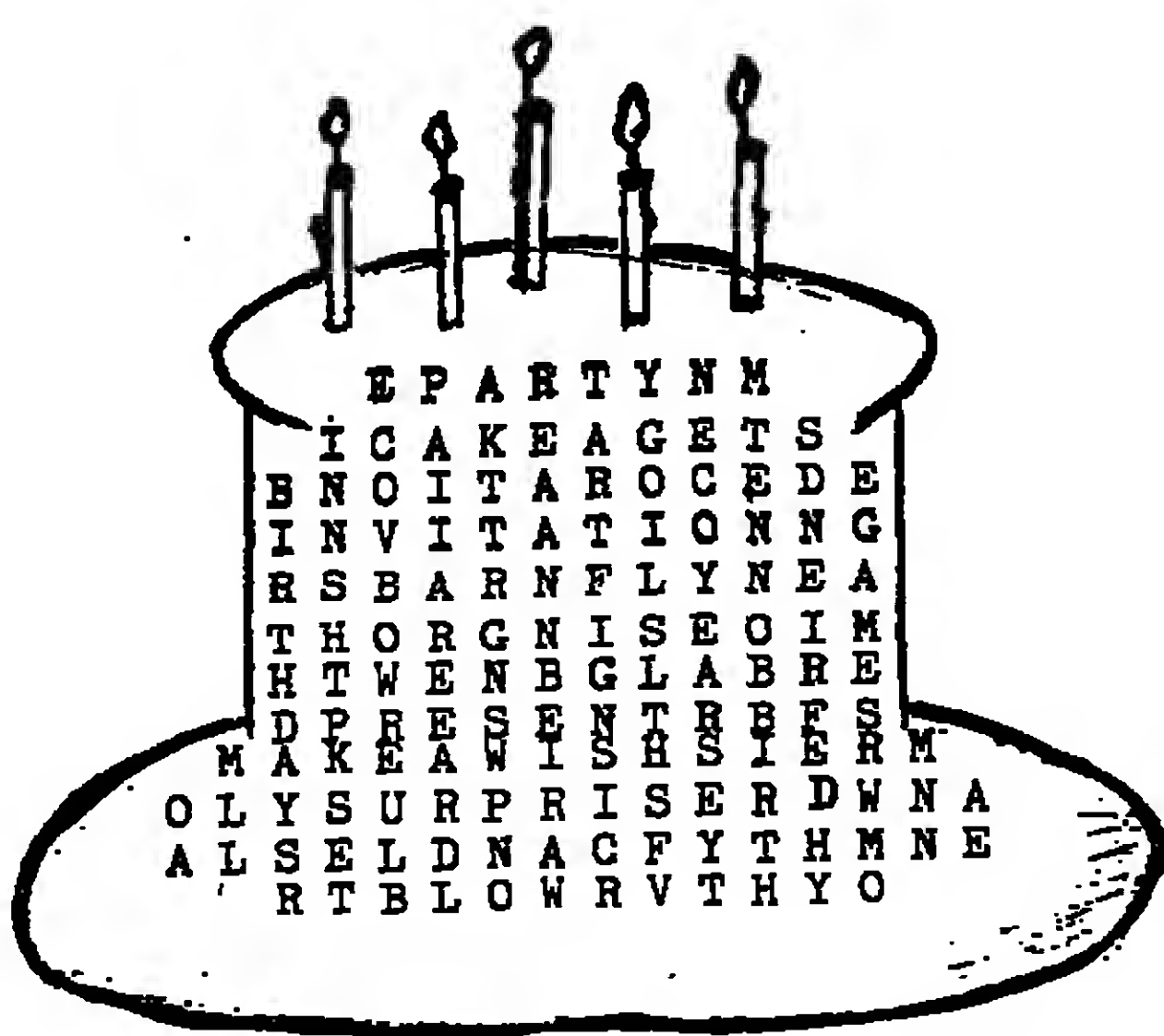
INGREDIENTS:
1 lb. cooked chicken. 12 black olives, heart
3 hard-boiled eggs, quartered. white cabbage, salt
1 tablespoon wine vinegar and pepper.
6 spring onions, ½ pint wine dressing
3 stalks white celery

METHOD: Shred cabbage and celery very finely, mix with the onions and seasoning. Stir in the vinegar and arrange at the bottom of a salad bowl. Cover with the shredded chicken and the hard-boiled eggs. Pour the wine dressing over the whole and decorate with olives. Serve well chilled.

PERPLEXITIES

ALL THE WORDS below will be found in the illustration. Some read up, down, sideways, and even backwards. How many can you find?

AGE BIRTHDAY BLOW BOW BOW CAKE CANDLES DECORATION FRIENDS GAMES GIFT INVITATION MAKE A WISH PARTY PRESENT RIBBON SING SURPRISE YEARS



Thoughts for this week

I have three phobias which, could I mute them, would make my life as slick as a sonnet, but as dull as ditch water: I hate to go to bed, I hate to get up, and I hate to be alone — Tallulah Bankhead, American actress (1903-1968).

History must always be taken with a grain of salt. It is, after all, not a science but an art — Phyllis McGinley, American poet and author (1905-1978).

The man who does not learn is dark, like one walking in the night — Chinese proverb.

Don't forget to love yourself — Soren Kierkegaard, Danish philosopher (1813-1855).

Quando amor no es locura, no es amor (When love is not madness, it is not love) — Pedro Calderon de la Barca, Spanish dramatist (1600-1681).

To be nobody-but-myself — in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else — means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight, and never stop fighting — E.E. Cummings (1894-1962).

A compelling social performance that is unique

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen

(1) All that is needed to become a writer

The question that writers are most frequently asked is, "Do you think every one has a book in them?" Anyone who has ever been praised for their skill as a letter or even a postcard writer thinks writing is easy. People do not, presumably, forever inquire of engineers, "Do you think everyone has a bridge in them?" Most of us know perfectly well that it takes more than the knack of boiling an egg to be a great chef. Yet nearly everyone seems to think that — given a bit of peace and quiet — they could write a novel.

The assumptions behind this are not flattering to novelists. First the question implies that anyone who can tell a good anecdote or bedtime story could also write: as though a novel were an artless collection of words directed at an indulgent audience. In fact, a good novel is as elaborately constructed as a bridge. It needs a driving plot, a believable cast of characters, a convincing setting, a flow of theme and purpose, woven together in clear, original prose. This should be set in a structure as symmetrical and beautiful as a bridge, reflecting life just as the bridge is reflected in the water, creating a double curve of art and reality.

Second, the questioner assumes that novels are little more than thinly disguised autobiography, so all that is needed to become a writer is the willingness to spill your guts, or life story.

Yet the longing for writing remains. It is not just

for the money... more probably for the joy of holding one's own words between hard covers and hoping, that one has, in a small way, cheated oblivion.

(2) Representations of the intellectual

As of last week, Radio Jordan has decided to give us a second run of a series of lectures given by Professor Edward Said. These lectures, better known as The Reith Lectures 1993, were broadcast in the summer of 1993 on BBC Radio.

In these lectures, Said pondered over the condition of the intellectual in order to define and justify what he has done, what he has been and what he is in the world. Maybe they were never meant to provide a homeland, but in truth, a home of sorts is exactly what he sought in these lectures, which should, more accurately have been entitled The Representation of Edward Said.

In the first of these lectures Said wrote that there is no such thing as a private intellectual since the moment one sets down words and then publishes them, one has entered the public world. Nor is there, he argued, only a public intellectual, someone who exists just as a figurehead or spokesperson or symbol of a cause, movement, or position. Said wrote that of those things that give meaning to what is being said or written, there always will be the personal inflection and the private sensibility: the whole point of being an intellectual was not to make his or her audience feel good, but to be embarrassing, contrary even unpleasant.

In the second lecture Said considered the influence of community, history and nationality on the individual's thinking.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, Dec. 8

7:30 N.B.A.

8:30 Road To Avonlea

Malcolm And The Baby

Sara and Felicity steal a baby for Aunt Abigail and Uncle Malcom.

9:10 Tequila And Bonetti

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — Losing Track

The film tells the story of a father and his 12-year-old son who try to resolve their emotional conflict after being apart for so many years.

12:00 The Investigator

Theos Last Chance

A man is pursued by the police after being charged with armed robbery and murder.

Friday, Dec. 9

7:30 Hollywood Stuntmakers

8:30 African Skies

The Gift

In his attempt to earn enough money to buy a gift, Rory accepts money from a stranger to deliver some mysterious packages to a nearby airstrip.

8:30 You Bet Your Life

9:00 P.M. Magazine

9:30 Heart Of Courage

Two people are rescued after being struck by lightning.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Blanche

Working tirelessly in a run-down clinic, Blanche experiences a unique sense of fulfillment as she cares for the sick and needy.

12:00 Never The Twain

A Night To Remember

While trying to help a neighbour, a man and his housemaid are held hostage by armed burglars.

Saturday, Dec. 10

7:30 Harry And The Hendersons

After she discovers that her duet partner is blind, Sara refuses to take part in the school singing contest.

8:00 Innovation

8:30 Quantum Leap

Sam goes back in time to assume a character which is thought to be a blood sucker.

9:10 Murder She Wrote

After receiving an anonymous letter while investigating the murder of a story-writer, Jessica's life is threatened by a gunshot.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — GodFather

When, after ruling for two generations, the Mafia's New York head dies, his son takes over reluctantly but later knows how to kill.

12:00 Major Dad

Major Dad punishes one of his men with a night out after inviting him for a party which he knows nothing about.

Sunday, Dec. 11

7:30 McHale's Navy

8:00 Phantom Horsemen

A captive lady is freed after the outbreak of a great battle at the castle.

8:30 Quantum Leap

9:10 Galactica

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — GodFather

12:00 The Upper Hand

No sooner had she helped a friend in need than Caroline starts to feel sorry for what she did.

Monday, Dec. 12

7:30 Black Beauty

8:00 Boogies Diner

The manager assigns a new girl at his store despite all the obstacles he faces.

8:30 Quantum Leap

9:10 Shades Of L.A.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Grushko

A journalist, who is a hard supporter of justice and freedom, is found dead. Colonel Grushko, an obstinate opponent of street violence and mob action, gets to work immediately.

Tuesday, Dec. 13

7:30 F.B.I.: The Untold Stories

8:00 World Echo

8:30 Quantum Leap

9:10 Cracking The Code

10:00 News In English

10:20 First Circle

Chaos takes place within the Russian government after uncovering a conspiracy with the U.S. embassy during Stalin's rule back in 1940.

11:10 Fly By Night

The life of the enigmatic French co-pilot, Jean, is a stake after being threatened by armed men in their attempt to take hold of his father's estates.

Wednesday, Dec. 14

7:30 Cosch

8:30 Quantum Leap

9:10 Law And Order

10:00 News In English

10:20 Snowy River

Matt and Kathleen strike a deal while attempting to protect the life of railway children from food poisoning and malnutrition.

11:10 Coming Of Age

An indispensable reference on Palestinian ordeals in Lebanon

Too Many Enemies: The Palestinian Experience in Lebanon
By Rosemary Sayegh

Dr. Sayegh's book has been very well received by the public. It has also proven to be an indispensable source for an in-depth view of the Palestinian ordeal in Lebanon.

Since 1948, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have been subjected to all sorts of misfortunes and oppression. In describing the scope of their plight, Dr. Sayegh traces the early beginnings of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. Between 700,000 to one million Palestinian refugees were expelled from their homeland and fled to neighbouring Arab countries. Of these, some 110,000 refugees chose to settle in Lebanon. The sudden arrival of such large numbers at the time (about 10 per cent of the total population of Lebanon) added to the heavy burden of a country poor in natural resources and with an exhausted economy.

This relatively huge influx of refugees was at first met with indifference and later acquiescence. The small size of the Lebanese army and its aloofness from politics partly shaped this Lebanese reaction and eventually, gave rise to the anti-Palestinian militias which would later play a major role in the hostilities with the Palestinians. The upper and middle class Palestinian refugees were easily accepted into the Lebanese society. They settled in cities and were able to secure employment with relative ease. Christian refugees were easily granted Lebanese nationality and were permitted to engage in professions like medicine, law and engineering. Most of the refugees, however, were of rural origins, and they were the ones to suffer the greatest material hardships, economic exploitation and loss of civil and national rights.

The majority of the less fortunate refugees settled in seventeen camps that were managed by UNRWA. For almost a decade since their settlement in Lebanon, the Palestinian refugees were subjected to various forms of repression and intimidation by both the police and the Deuxieme Bureau. The Arab League vis-a-vis Israel during the 1948 war produced a series of coups, violent upheavals and assassinations of prominent political leaders. The rise of Arab nationalism in the early fifties had a dual effect on the Palestinian refugees. In order to ride the tide of seething national feelings, the regime of Fuad Chehab was forced to placate the Sunnis, who formed Egyptian President Jamal Abdul Nasser's power base in Lebanon, and to impose even harsher measures of oppression on the camps in order to intimidate Palestinian youths from joining nascent Palestinian resistance groups which were in the process of formation.

The major turning points for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and elsewhere, came after the humiliating Arab defeat of June 1967. The emergence of the Palestinian Resistance Movement (PRM)

has had profound effects on Lebanon. The relatively large size of the Palestinian community in Lebanon, coupled with the deepening socio-economic crisis, caused a rupture in the delicate equilibrium that had kept Lebanon relatively calm since the civil war of 1958. From then onwards, the Palestinians found themselves involved in the complex maze of Lebanese politics. Predominantly Sunni Muslims, well armed and trained, the Palestinians became a force to be reckoned with.

At the beginning, the ascending power of the Palestinians was welcomed by the deprived, exploited and impoverished Lebanese including, but not restricted to, the Shiites. The growing military imbalance between the PRM and its Lebanese allies was soon to create resentment and later hatred, especially among ordinary citizens who were not in the rank and file of progressive and leftist parties. The Palestinians were blamed for the increasing loss in human lives and material destruction which Israeli retaliatory actions caused. Some Lebanese even labelled the Palestinians as a colonising power.

The hostility of the Maronite right and parts of the Lebanese government was understandable and expected. What caused a constant worry for the PRM was the growing alienation — later hostility — of the Shiites of South Lebanon who were becoming increasingly anti-Palestinian.

Israel was monitoring events in Lebanon with increasing concern. The PRM entrenchment in and

control of Beirut and south Lebanon had enabled it to pose a serious political if not military threat to Israel. Dislodging the PRM from these areas became a priority for Israel. The defeat and uprooting of the resistance from these areas would not only relieve Israel of an ever-increasing threat to its security, it would also help create a moderate leadership in the occupied territories, a leadership that Israel could cope with.

The creation of a Maronite-dominated government in Lebanon has always been a basic goal for Israel. In addition, Israel hoped to marginalise Syria and with it the Steadfastness Front that were so vehemently opposed to the Camp David accords. With Menachem Begin as premier, Ariel Sharon as defence minister and Alexander Haig as U.S. secretary of state, the scene was finally set for the invasion of Lebanon. Sharon's ensuing blitzkrieg was the most destructive in the history of Arab-Israeli wars. Lack of international and Arab effective deterrence encouraged Israel to use weapons of mass destruction on a scale unprecedented before. Attacking with overwhelming superiority in fire power, Israel was able to reach East Beirut in a few days. West Beirut was heavily bombed from the sea and air for three successive months. But it wasn't until the assassination of President Bashir Gemayel that Israel ventured to occupy West Beirut, thus creating a crisis of confidence with the U.S.

Although the PRM was forced to evacuate West Beirut as a result of an American sponsored agreement, other calculations on which Israel had based its invasion began to backfire. The Sabra, Shatila massacres tarnished Israel's image and caused widespread international attention. The collapse of the official Israel-Lebanese 17 May (1983) accords finally undermined Israel's hopes for a separate peace treaty with Lebanon. The Syrian come-back to West Beirut did not take long, and the Lebanese opposition gained momentum due to the heroic resistance it put up against Israel. Mounting casualties demoralised the Israeli army and vitiated its image of invincibility, and Israel began to consider a phased withdrawal from the quagmire it found itself in.

In the post-invasion period, Amin Gemayel's regime relied heavily on American support and the Maronite-dominated army. Efforts towards national reconciliation were avoided. The repressive nature of his regime soon loudly manifested itself. The Lebanese army entered West Beirut and began to behave like an occupying army, confiscating arms, setting up check-points and conducting house to house searches. The army and Maronite excesses, Israel's atrocities and the deepening economic crisis were factors that caused widespread discontent in West Beirut. The Lebanese army was once again dissolved as soldiers of different sects deserted it en masse and various militias took control of West Beirut. The Syrians began to gradually regain control of West Beirut and even sent regular army units into the city, sponsored by the Arab League.

The PRM began to re-arm and the tempo of smuggling weapons into Lebanon increased considerably. Some of the Fateh (Arafatists) fighters who were previously evacuated from the camps, had returned. Intra-Palestinian feuds and constant militia clashes further alienated the Lebanese people. Arafat's relations with the Syrians grew more and more tense and Syrian harassment of Arafatists intensified. The strained Palestinian (mainly Fateh) relations with the Syrians need special emphasis and should be analysed in a more detailed fashion due to their damaging impact. In retrospect, the beginnings of the already tense relations can be traced to the beginning of the direct military Syrian intervention in the Lebanese Civil War. For reasons of its own, Syria decided to cast its lot in the raging civil war to deprive the Lebanese Left and the PRM of an impending military victory over the Maronites and their allies. Such victory, the Syrians calculated, would disrupt the delicate internal balance of power among Lebanese factions and would invite direct foreign military intervention. The Syrian-Palestinian relations raged from direct and bloody confrontation, as during the battles of Sidon and Tripoli, to indirect internal interference in the affairs of the PRM. Syria could be blamed for more than one schism that plagued the main Palestinian resistance movement, Fateh. In the south, however, Palestinian-Shiite relations were rapidly deteriorating. Israel's retaliatory strikes against Shiites villages — which were intentionally out of proportion to PRM attacks —

greatly helped exacerbate an already tense situation. A list of accusations against the Palestinians included, but were not restricted to, "ugly acts of theft, rape, crimes, extortion and oppression". Such were the relations between the Shiites and the Palestinians on the eve of Amal's attack on the camps. Trained and armed by Syria, and encouraged by the rising anti-Palestinian sentiments, the Amal-Palestinian war of attrition broke out on May 19, 1985 and lasted well over two years. The war took the form of successive sieges against Shatila: the siege of Ramadan May 19-June 22; the one month siege of May 29-June 27, 1986; the Five Month siege Nov. 25, 1986-April 6, 1987. The common ordeal of the Palestinians forced them to put aside their differences and, within days, a joint military leadership was formed. The war dragged on intermittently for roughly two years. It is hard to estimate the scope of destruction, the extent of the impact of the "War of the Camps" on the Palestinian community had more serious implications. The inter-related economic and social relations between Palestinians and Shiites, built up and strengthened since 1948, were disrupted beyond repair. Palestinians did not take political advantage of their military victory in the "War of the Camps". Syrian arrests of Fateh loyalists (Arafatists) escalated. This was a manifestation of the decade long feud between Syria and the PLO. Bloody battles such as the one that raged in Sidon in 1976 together with arrests and hostile rhetoric were among the various aspects that this crippling animosity took. Only members of pro Syrian organisations were allowed free entry into, and exit from the camps. As the Syrian siege dragged on, intra-Palestinian tension mounted. The intra Fateh battle every one feared finally broke out at the end of April 1988, and continued throughout May and June. Ironically, the camp that Amal had tried so hard to occupy but failed, finally fell into friendly anti-Arafatist hands. Fateh loyalists were evacuated to Sidon. Shatila became nothing more than a mass of rubble, with not one building standing. Thus, another bloody chapter of the history of the Palestinians in their diaspora was closed. What additional ordeals still await the Palestinians, no one precisely knows.

Dr. Sayegh's book offers a detailed account of the Palestinian ordeals in Lebanon. The publication of this documentary book in this form and content is an effort that Dr. Sayegh should be thanked for. It will no doubt be an indispensable reference for all scholars who need to take a detailed look at these tumultuous years. Despite this, in my opinion, there was a failure to mention some major massacres such as Tel Al Zaatar, while the Sabra, Shatila massacre itself was not extensively covered. The Syrian role in Lebanon, its aims, goals, and tools were not analysed in depth. The strained Palestinian (Fateh)-Syrian relations, mutual fears, mistrust and apprehensions were not tackled in a manner commensurate with their vital important and damaging effects to both.

Dr. Asad Abdul Rahman

BOOK REVIEWS

Celluloid wars split Chinese film industry

By Giles Hewitt
BEIJING — China's attempts to restructure its film industry are floundering amid bitter official infighting and an escalating dispute over foreign film imports.

The main protagonists — state distribution companies — say they are struggling to preserve the future of the domestic film sector, but the real battle is over the remnants of jealously-guarded distribution monopolies broken up by the reform programme.

China's film industry, plagued by poor quality productions, has been in free fall since 1979, with box office takings plunging from 29.3 billion yuan (\$4 billion) to 9.5 billion yuan last year.

Once the bastion of the

industry has been unable to compete with alternatives like television, video and karaoke which have flourished with China's opening to the outside world.

The latest threat has come from abroad, with the Ministry of Film, Radio and Television's decision to import 10 top-grossing overseas movies a year, mainly from the United States.

The move was greeted with outrage in some circles, which accused the authorities of selling out the domestic film industry to foreign producers.

"We are not against these films, but we feel the timing is wrong," said Bai Andan, president of the Beijing Film Distribution Co. (BFDC).

"The Chinese film industry is undergoing major reform and restructuring, so we should give local film studios time to adapt and become more competitive before going ahead with such high-quality imports," Mr. Bai said.

Quality is the crucial issue.

Previously, foreign imports have been limited to cut-price, third-rate movies which have nevertheless enjoyed a significant market share, and many fear that overseas blockbusters could shut out local productions completely.

Of the 187 films marketed here last year, Mr. Bai pointed out that foreign imports numbered 44 and accounted for 31 per cent of distribution income.

"We feel that is already enough, without the added pressure of major foreign films," Mr. Bai said.

A far more aggressive stance was taken by the BFDC's vice director, Wang Zhu, who wrote a stinging letter to the ministry in April.

"Whoever allows U.S. films to occupy the ground belonging to Chinese films is feeding foreign film moguls with Chinese money," Wang wrote. Labelling those responsible "the new compradors" — a reference to the much vilified Chinese who acted as business go-betweens for foreign firms in the late 19th century.

The BFDC's main antagonist is the China Film Distribution Co. (CFDC), which has been charged with handling the distribution of the imports.

"It is ridiculous to call us 'new compradors'," said a senior CFDC executive, Geng Xilin.

"These films have a positive role to play in promoting national film development," Mr. Geng said, arguing that the imports would encourage domestic studios to raise production standards.

While both sides claim the moral high ground, their dispute also involves a growing power struggle for distribution rights.

Some 32 provincial and municipal distributors have been set up since last year when the ministry axed the CFDC's monopoly on Chinese productions and only allowed it to handle foreign films.

According to Mr. Bai, the CFDC's enthusiasm for the imports is based on the fact that its annual revenue has gone from a high of 100 million yuan in the early 1980s to a loss of 80 million yuan last year.

"The CFDC is basically only concerned with its own interests. If they don't import these films, they don't make money," Mr. Bai said.

The row came to a head with the arrival in November of the first U.S. import, *The Fugitive*. The BFDC refused to handle the film, prompting the CFDC to sign a contract with a smaller Beijing distributor.

A legal battle ensued with both sides claiming jurisdiction and the film was pulled out early and the box office takings were frozen, pending a ruling on the contract's validity.

The confusion over who controls what is likely to deepen next year, when domestic and foreign producers will be allowed to directly sell films to cinemas here, without going through official distributors.

Kings singers are low-tech winners

By Michael Conlon
Reuter

CHICAGO — In an age when some musical acts share the concert stage with as much smoke, mirrors and fire-works as music, the Kings singers are stubbornly low-tech.

And the six men from Britain — now on a new North American tour as they begin the act's second quarter-century-plan to keep it that way.

When they come on stage at sold-out after sold-out venue, it's just six remarkable voices giving life to music that tangles nearly every sense. From Madrigals and Chanteys to Beatles and Broadway, they draw from a library of thousands of works in nine languages spanning six centuries.

"We have a joke we play with the audience," bass Stephen Connolly told Reuters before a recent concert. "We tell them things are bad in England and we had to leave behind our orchestra and the chorus of 200 grenadiers."

"I confess, I don't feel so at ease about it," she said. "When songs are made in one language, that's them. When you put them into English, they're not the same. They lose something."

Lima's first U.S. tour, tentatively set for January or February 1995, probably will begin in New York, where she's played before, and take her to major cities on both coasts.

"Making it in the states is the target," she said. "How can people relate to my music if they can't understand it? I want to plant some seeds and try to build it up."

gets lost in the translation.

The group has issued more than 70 recordings over the years and is featured along with Diana Ross and the Modern Jazz Quartet on the 1994 hall-mark Christmas album.

At least five of their albums have made the billboard best-selling charts, including *A Little Christmas Music* with opera soprano Kiri Te Kanawa, and two collections of British folk songs.

Connolly said that despite the globe-circling schedule, the group manages to take three weeks off at Christmas and again at Easter, and is off again for six weeks in the summer.

The group rehearses for two hours the afternoon before each concert, followed by tea at which problems are solved and plans are made in what the members say is an unremittingly democratic fashion.

Marina Lima — a natural ambassador of South American soul

By Bill Krole
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — In Brazil, where they take their music as seriously as their politics, Marina Lima may not be the reigning queen of pop — but she's got the ambassadorship locked.

Twelve albums and 16 years after she first began rock 'n' roll, Lima consistently has elbowed her way into the Brazilian top 10 in a land of such legends as Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso and Marisa Monte, that's no easy task.

But armed with a new record, her second U.S. release, the singer-guitarist known to mil-

lions of South Americans simply as Marina is readying for her first North American tour — and a chance to take the world by storm.

"With music, the world becomes very small. You can understand each other through music," she said in a recent interview in New York to promote the upcoming tour and the new album on Blue Note/World Pacific, *A Tug On The Line*.

Already popular in Europe, Lima, 39, seems practically predestined to gain a firm international foothold.

The daughter of an official for an international development agency, Lima spent part of her childhood in Washington, D.C., where the 1960s motown sound and Beatlemania left an indelible mark on her life and her music.

"At first, I was very angry at my parents," said Lima, who recalls being told she was going to the United States for two weeks, only to spend seven years here. "But without that experience, I wouldn't have heard songs from all over the world. I like mixtures in music."

And musically, Lima is nothing if not mixed. A little rock, a little jazz, a little blues and a lot of soul — it's a combination that has won the husky-voiced singer numerous Sharp Awards, the Brazilian equivalent of the U.S. Grammy.

She's at her eclectic best on *A Tug On The Line*, a collection of seamless, squeaky-clean tracks. Guitarist Lima wrote and arranged much of the new album with Pat MacDonald of Timbuk 3.

Most of the dozen songs are in her native Portuguese, but four tunes are in English. Among them is the sensual *Something That We Missed*. Also on the album is *O Chamado (The Calling)*, the de facto title track because it contains the Tug On The Line lyric.

There's even a video version of *O Chamado* out in Brazil — a slick production that seems made for

MTV, with a moody Marina lamenting lost love from the seaside cliffs above Rio De Janeiro.

On Professional Dependence, the Lima-MacDonald collaboration comes through: "Love is my addiction, I try to sanctify my affliction... mistake it for passion, the comic attraction."

It's a playful, feel-good album that parts company with the politically charged work of Gil Veloso and other Brazilian artists borne of the 1960s "Tropicalia" movement.

Yet Lima, now wrapping up a tour back in Brazil, is skittish about singing in English. She fears that too much soul

U.N. struggles over new AIDS strategy

By Emilia Casella

LONDON — The United Nations is on the verge of launching an initiative which could determine the way the world responds to the AIDS epidemic — but no-one knows yet what the central strategy will be, who will be in charge or how it will be run.

The proposed joint initiative between U.N. agencies "is different from anything the U.N. system has ever tried to do," says Mina Bail, of the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP).

With a budget expected to be more than \$100 mil-

lion a year, the new organisation will be the biggest spender in the international struggle against the disease, and could have the clout to influence the way individual governments spend their own AIDS budgets.

In addition, says Nick Dodd of the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA), bringing the AIDS activities of different U.N. agencies under one roof "clearly recognises HIV/AIDS is more than just a health problem... its ramifications go through to social and economic development."

A too-narrow focus on

the medical aspects of the disease has been a recurring criticism of official programmes.

But as five U.N. agencies and the World Bank jostle for a slice of the action, there are concerns that the Joint Co-Sponsored U.N. Programme on HIV/AIDS may end up as just another U.N. megabureaucracy.

The need for a coordinated approach stems from the continuing spread of the epidemic: The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that the total number of AIDS cases jumped by 60 per cent — to 4 million from

2.5 million — in the 12 months to July 1994. Allowing for under-reporting and under-diagnosis, WHO estimates that there are 14-15 million people infected with HIV in the world today. Most will develop full-blown AIDS within the next decade, taking a heavy toll on health services, social networks and, in some cases, national economies.

"A lot of people around the world still think this is not their problem," says Mina Bail, who was a member of the task force that initially studied the proposal.

"WHO figures estimate 40 million people will be infected by the year 2000. But if you look at dependency ratios (relatives of the sick, particularly the young and the old), between 200 million and 250 million will be affected," she says, adding that many will be between age 20 and 40: "They're the motors of development in their countries."

WHO accounts for 70-80 per cent of the world body's spending on AIDS, with the UNDP, UNFPA, the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the World Bank spending the rest.

The new body, scheduled to start in January 1996, will bring them all under one umbrella.

But while the new plan is a logical development in the AIDS fight, it is not yet a marriage of minds.

A draft plan of action is due by this January. Currently, the basic plan is for the new programme to work on two levels. Globally, the programme will be administered from Geneva, in place of WHO's Global Programme on AIDS, which will be closed down at the end of 1995. A key test will be money: greater efficiency from coordination is good, say many of those involved in tackling AIDS outside the U.N. system, but must not be used as an excuse to cut funding.

The second test of the programme will be at the other level — on the ground. On a country-by-country basis, the six agencies are to tailor services to individual countries' needs, coordinating their work through special committees which will consult with national governments and community groups.

The aim is to end the notorious duplication between U.N. programmes and to help national governments set their own priorities.

Critics such as Juan Jacobo Hernandez of the Mexican non-governmental agency Colectivo Sol warn that the programme will not be the panacea for which the U.N. is hoping.

He doubts whether country-level coordinating committees will improve services: "As far as Mexico is concerned, a combination of lack of political will from high authorities, the unwillingness to provide resources and attention to the spread of the epidemic is already a problem. It is unreal to expect that a U.N. initiative will improve this."

Timothy Stamps, Zimbabwe's minister of health and child welfare, agrees that much will depend on each country's health system, its budget and its relationship with U.N. officials on the ground.

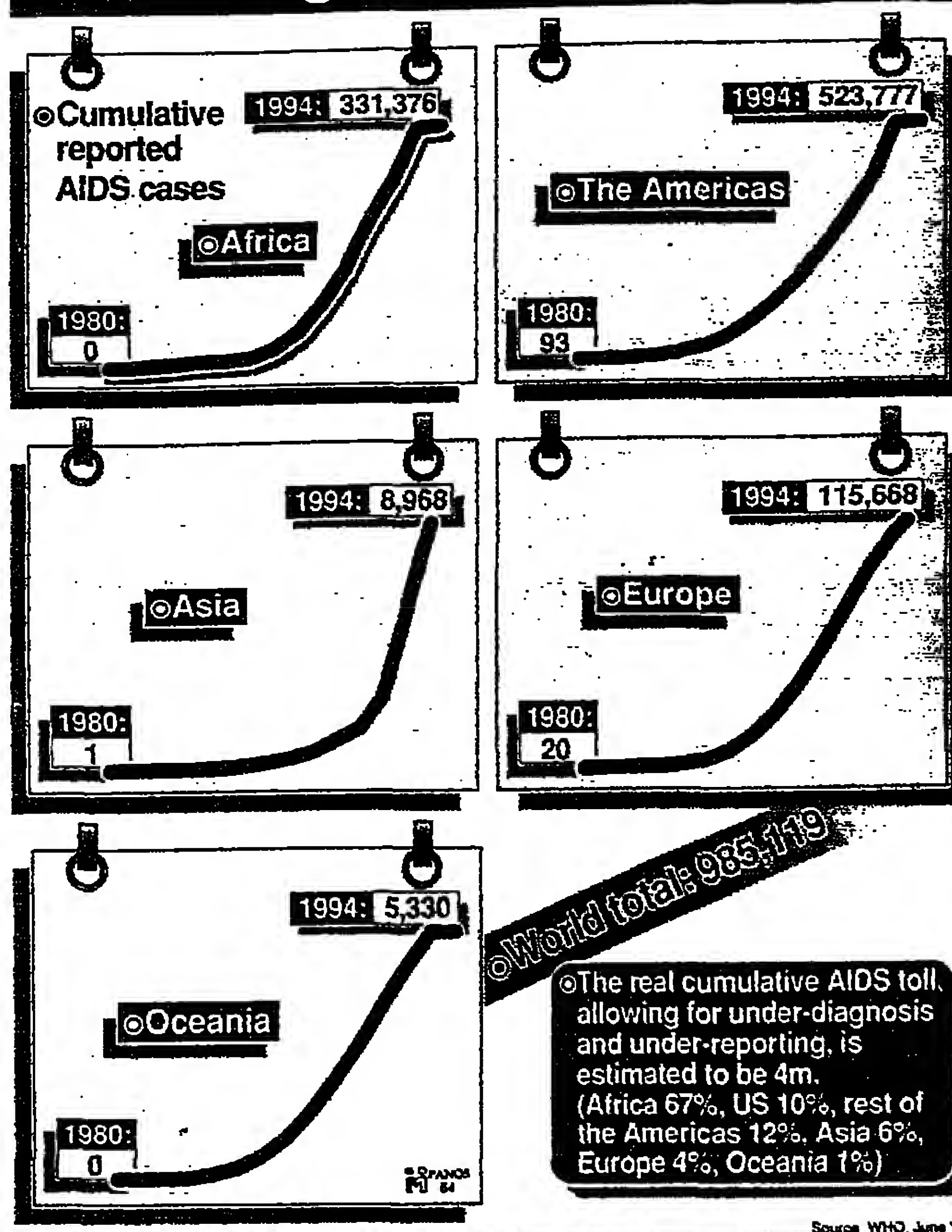
In addition, Mr. Stamps is concerned that political considerations rather than real need will influence the new programme's priorities.

"Ultimately, the policy-maker, however, reluctant it claims to be, will be the World Bank," says Mr. Stamps, adding: "How much investment is the world prepared to put into an issue which, for many countries — even if they have HIV problems — is not a major issue, and from the point of view of votes, is not a consideration? Preventing blacks from getting AIDS in developing countries won't get many votes for a politician in the developed world."

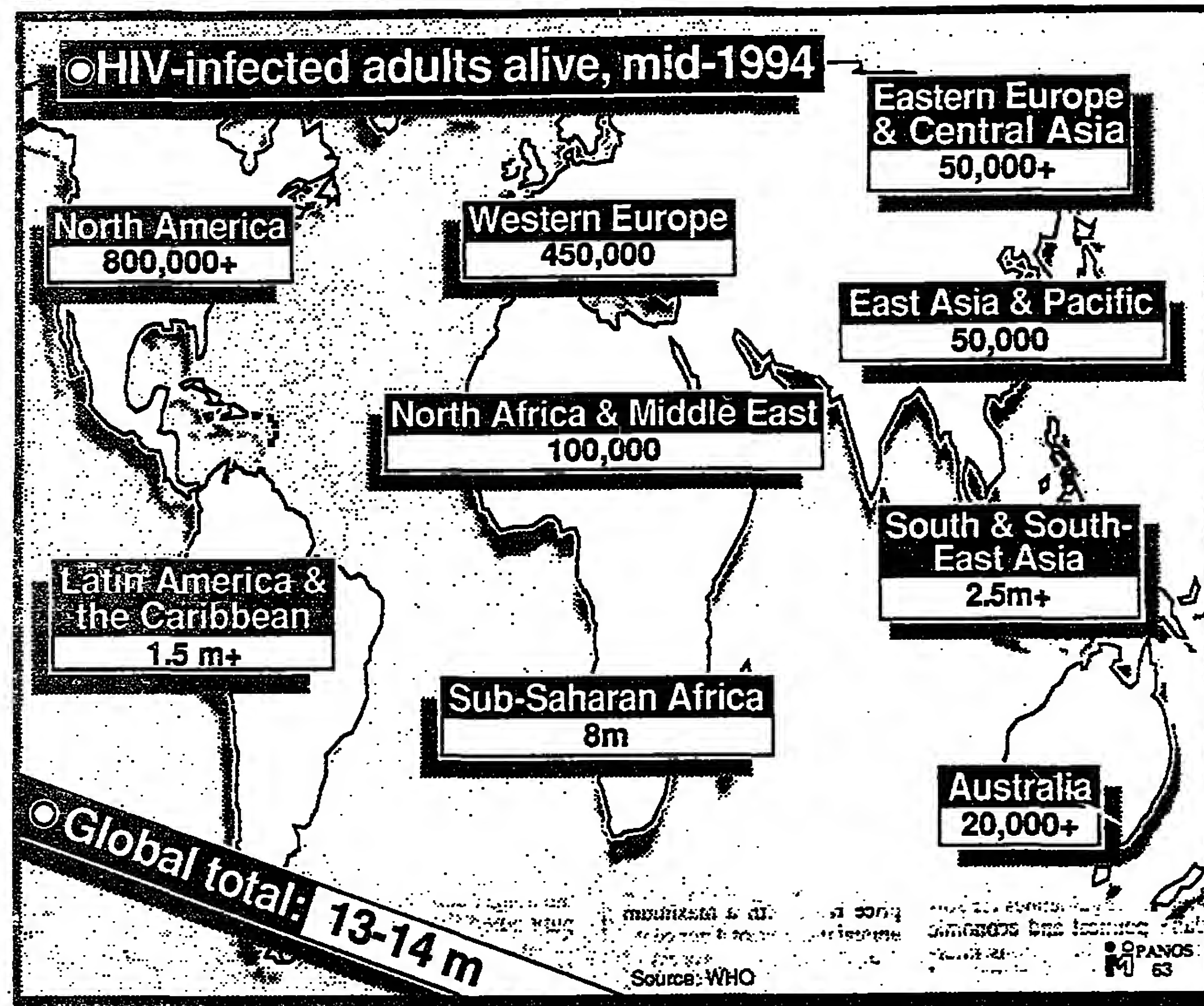
Jonathan Mann, former head of the Global Programme on AIDS and now chair of the Global AIDS Policy Coalition based at Harvard University in the U.S. says the danger is that new programme could end up reinforcing the status quo:

"If it does not develop a

The rising toll



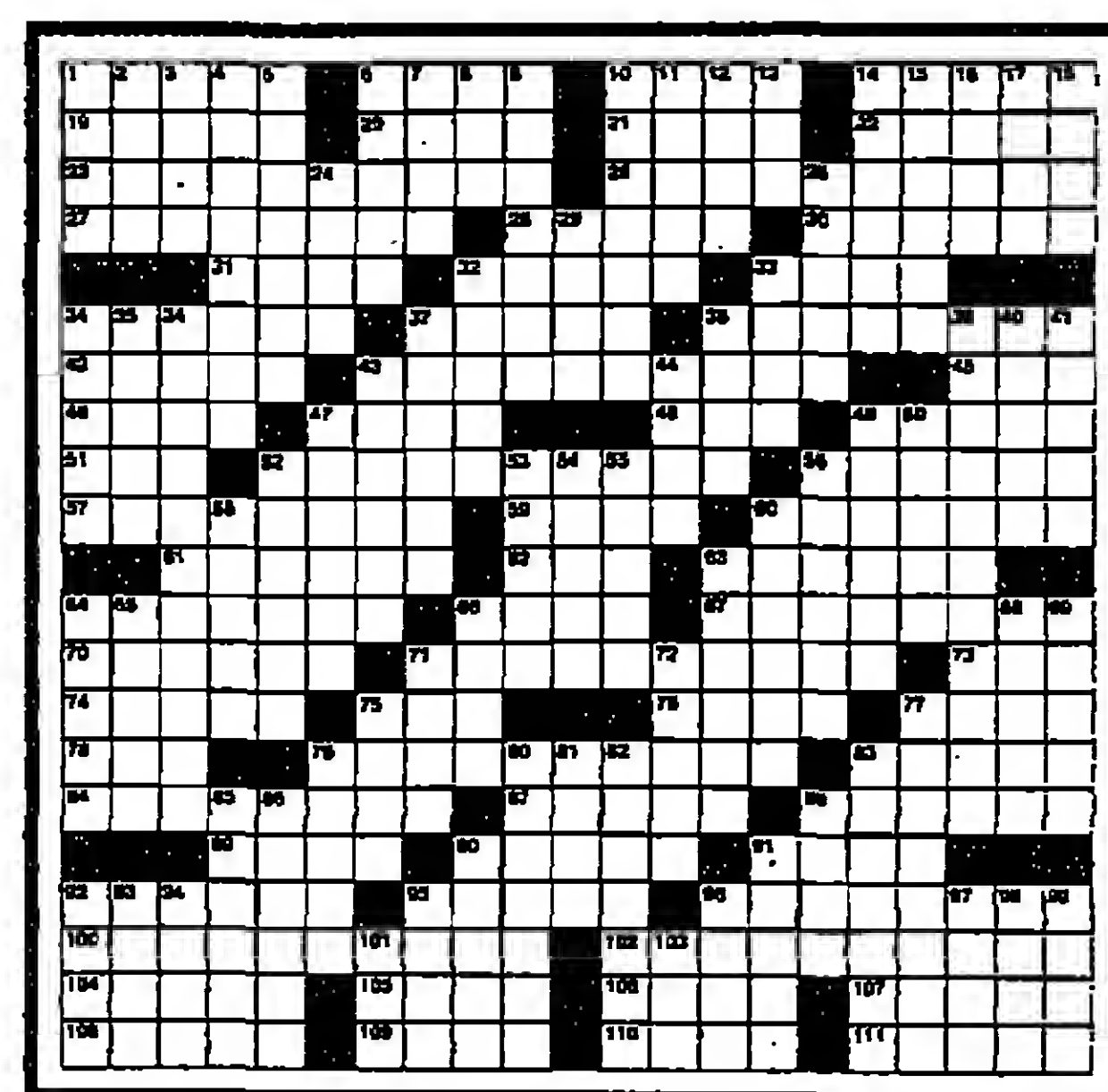
Portrait of an epidemic



WEEKEND CROSSWORD

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS
By Joel Davajan

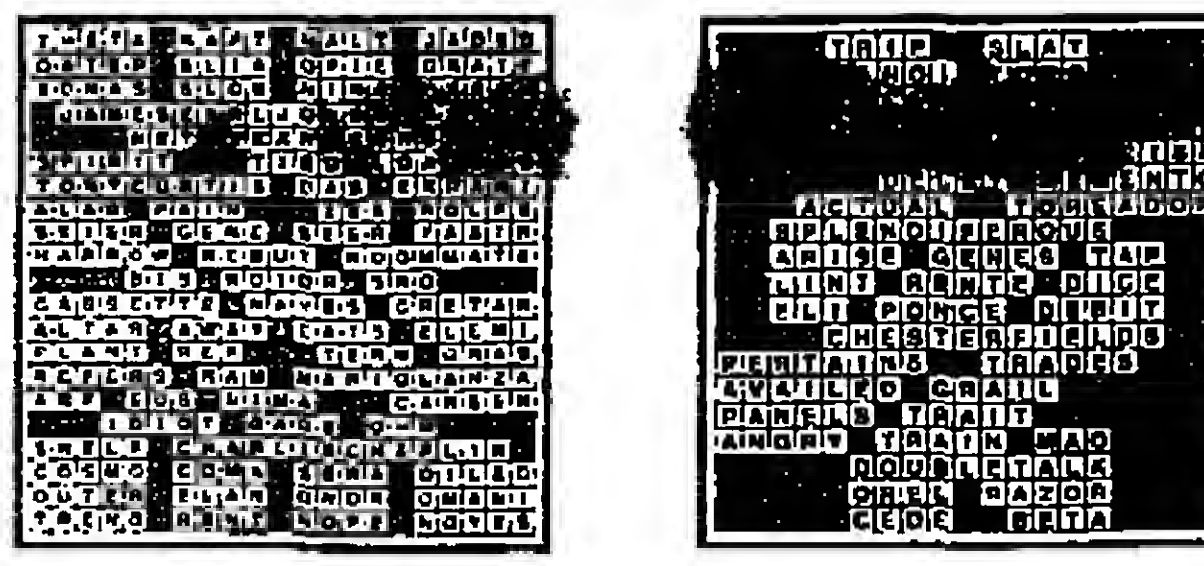
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Diagramless 17 x 17
By Frances Burton

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SOLUTIONS OF LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE



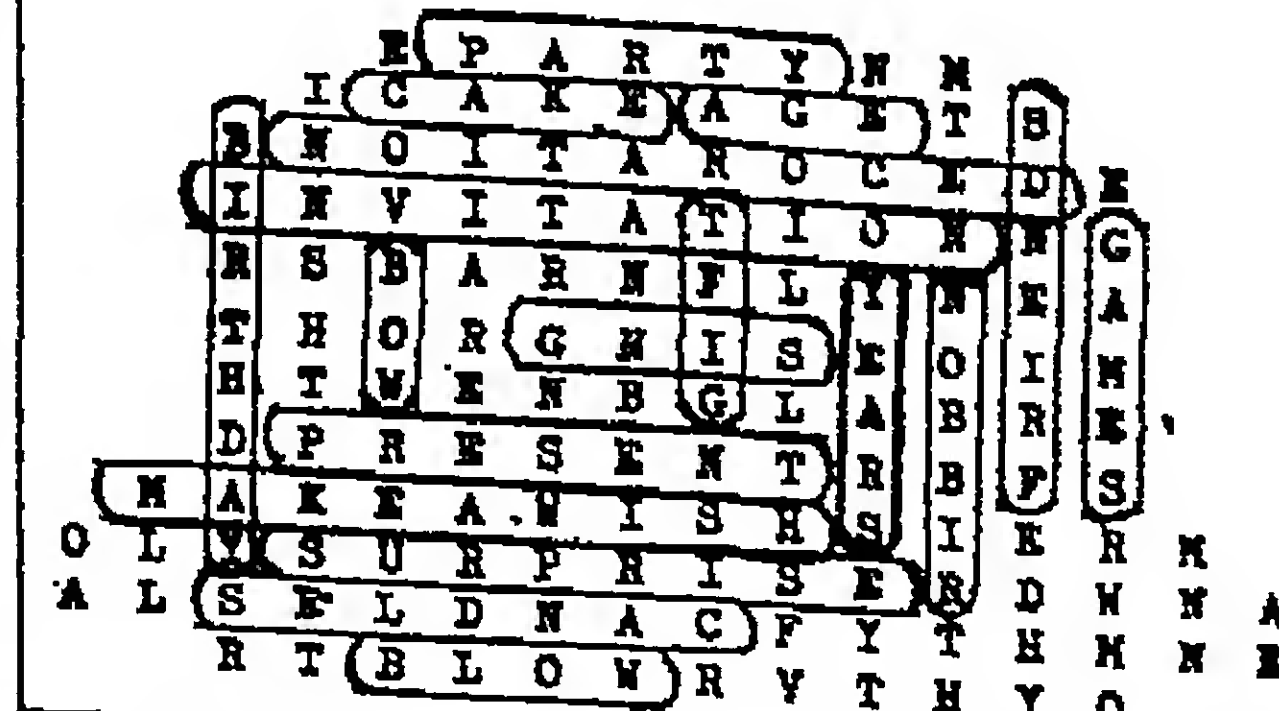
- Last Week's Cryptograms
1. Last of big-time spenders treats his best girlfriend to a cheap hot dog at roadside stand. Some cash!
 2. Should a sweater make us sweat while we pled, and must we wear a parka in the park?
 3. Dumb chump who teased benign chimp got his comeuppance with one surprising punch right in the nose.
 4. Why is it that we ask, "How do you do?" when we meet? It makes no sense. How you do what?
- CRYPTOGRAMS
1. OPXTE TODE ZACXEDDU. HAPY KANKE
XII PRONOXJE EXCY DEY TABBOHAPY
AKS QERYE AJ X PYBOW. NBXIU NEXHY.
— By Rita Salva
 2. VUN TWO HUT DTTECCWW HWCNEUY CLARY
CMO QPMQV JT CVCN YARM AFY
GCLQDFWQ JREY URCWFJMRD. — By E.C. Doyle
 3. ABBRYES ACMY LU ALSO OLDY ECIPYMYI
CMP UCIDYI BE TLLS ILS. — By Ed Haddadson
 4. FLING DROTL BIRTD HIQQ NIQC WLIFED.
DOWNHILDI! — By Barbara J. Bagg

ANSWERS

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Agoraphobia is a morbid fear of being in open place.
Amnesia is loss of memory.
Aphasia is a psycho-pathological state characterised by the belief that the patient is being persecuted or somebody of importance.
☆☆☆
2. A herring is the fresh fish.
A bloater is a herring very slightly salted and smoked for three or four hours only.
A kipper is rubbed with salt and pepper and smoked for a longer time.
☆☆☆
3. AINUS is the northern islands of Japan.
DYAKS in Borneo.
TAMILS in northern Ceylon and southern India.
BANTU in the southern part of Africa.
AFRIDIS in the neighbourhood of the Khyber Pass in the Himalayas.
MASAI in East Africa.
MAORIS in New Zealand.
BERBERS in Algeria and the Sahara.
BHILIS in Central India.
SWAHILIS in Zanzibar and the neighbouring mainland.
☆☆☆
4. MONSIEUR in France.
HERR in Germany.
SIGNOR in Italy.
SEÑOR in Spain.
MYNHEER in Holland.
☆☆☆

PERPLEXITIES



Majali: Jordan sought greater regional role

(Continued from page 1)

with a solid will. We did not sign a peace treaty hoping for a bribe or for a bag of money to be dropped in our laps, we did it following a thorough study and examination of our situation, after appreciating our position very carefully and after having negotiated the restoration of our rights with dignity and honour.

We are now entering an era of hard and diligent work in the course of regaining our rights and are honouring our commitments which, among other things, require from us to be well-prepared on the domestic front and to confront and deal with our painful problems with daring solutions which the executive authority alone cannot handle on its own.

We have entered peace as a sovereign state and therefore we should be prepared to meet the requirements of peace with well-prepared, efficient institutions. The government believes that there can be no solution for the socio-economic issues, for boosting production and for improving the performance of various organisations except with the Parliament's cooperation.

Peace is not a mere treaty with Israel, it is rather a full transformation of our new regional and international role.

We are faced with two options: To leave to others the task of planning for us, and in that case we will find ourselves in a position in which we are forced to live with those plans against our will, or to take part in formulating the future for ourselves and have our own influence on the course of events and in that case we would remain in a stronger negotiating position and better able to protect our rights and interests.

We also realise that our role would be even stronger if we reach a formula for coordination and cooperation with the Arab states since we seek to make use of Jordan's central geographical location and its policies and the strength of its people's potentials to achieve the best we can for the Kingdom and the Arab Nation at large.

We are in need of financial support, but can we tell the

world that we entered peace and now we want to cash in on that?

The answer is that the time for such barter has gone for ever. Gone is the time when Arabs, with their oil boom and wealth, extended financial aid to us and we must realise that the Arabs will no longer assist us financially even if Jordanian relations with the Arab states return to their former status.

We must realise that our Arab brothers now have a different view and different way to deal with us, and they no more possess brimming coffers ready for giving away. These brothers are now wishing to become partners in all they offer us. We in Jordan are quite ready to strengthen our relations with the Arab countries on clear, sound and solid bases that could guarantee all parties' interests and the government would do its best to achieve that goal.

As to the world, we should realise that those nations with surplus funds and able to offer economic and financial assistance to others want to know how the aid will be

spent; they refuse to offer financial aid unless they are sure the aid is connected with economic endeavours and are convinced of these efforts.

These nations are willing to offer funding for development projects in the form of grants and loans, especially if these are to finance regional schemes and have clear connection with supporting stability, peace and security.

I have not heard any person of good standing who demanded that the peace treaty be linked to the amount of financial aid. God forbid that anyone would do that. By signing the peace treaty, Jordan has given the world and our region a better chance for reconstruction and progress.

We have to realise our priorities and find a way to maximise the benefits for the country and create the right and sound channels for spending funds so that we can contain problems like unemployment and poverty. We do not want to spend funds for consumption but rather to transform the available funds into wealth for investments. Given the present situation

and the regional and international developments around us we sought to work out a budget that could reflect the reality and the aspirations based on clear principles and theories.

The Armed Forces and the Public Security will remain the country's defence shield and it is incumbent on us to keep them ready, well-prepared and supplied with up-to-date equipment. We need to build our future on a foundation of stability and security and be able to defend our rights and interests therefore we sought to find sufficient funds to achieve this goal.

The ministerial committee preparing the budget has been careful to adapt the volume of expenditure to the available funds.

It has introduced reasonable increases to the current expenses and the surplus has been distributed to capital projects. The projects to which the government is committed proved they require more funds than could be provided for from the surplus of the current expenses. Hence a deficit in the budget.

As to projects linked to the peace treaty, they were debated by the Council of

Ministers regarding their financing.

The required funds for these projects will be available. We are seeking with all our might to acquire them and are giving this question top priority, because including projects in the budget without making arrangements for financing them would only increase the volume of deficit.

The government has finally decided that the peace projects should be listed under the budget's supplement, but we are certain that they will be implemented through our relentless efforts.

You all realise that Jordan has started applying an economic reform policy since 1989 and we are applying this within the framework of an ambitious programme. This policy has borne fruit and succeeded in rectifying many imbalances in our national economy, following years of inflation and a drop in the real economic growth and after a period when the balance of payment, the Jordanian foreign currency reserves and the rate of exchange of the Jordanian dinar fell under increased pressure, during the first half of 1994. But I must say that everything is back to normal now, in the

second half of the year.

Our main concern now is unemployment and poverty which are closely linked because a solution to the unemployment problem would reduce the rate of poverty.

We ought to objectively study the unemployment issue so that we can find an appropriate solution to it, especially by creating jobs and not merely by increasing the number of government employees which is costly to the state and bears serious consequences as the salaries are paid at the expense of investments.

Our guest workers are estimated at 200,000 and Jordanians continue to shun jobs done by the guest workers. Our experience has taught us that the most effective means of fighting unemployment and poverty lies in investment in productive projects. Until we signed the peace treaty our country was deprived of many investment opportunities but with the advent of peace we have seen a desire on the part of Arab and foreign investors to establish industrial projects in the Kingdom.

So far, the total registered capital runs into hundreds of millions of dinars and the

future is bound to witness more investments.

The government is determined to reexamine the current legislations regarding investments and we have gone a long way to achieve that goal in cooperation with the private sector.

Regarding administrative reform, the government intends to redistribute responsibilities and authorities and enable local governors to act for the central government. This will enhance democracy and ensure a fairer distribution of authority and a just distribution of gains for all.

We agree with the majority of people who look forward to reap the benefit of peace and who aspire to a higher standard of living. But to achieve all these, the Kingdom is in need of obtaining external funds and we need to change our approach in dealing with the Arab region and the world at large so that we can attract further funds for more investment.

The government is determined to pursue efforts for the development of the country's industry. We will do all we can to improve production and the quality of products so that they can compete successfully with other products of the world.

Gammoh: Budget aims for self-reliance

(Continued from page 1)

port, water, energy and infrastructure with costs exceeding \$18 billion.

It is expected that this region will witness positive changes at the political, economic and social levels. God willing, the Amman economic summit will be held next year. The national working groups have started preparing for this important conference and currently they are preparing technical and feasibility studies on national and regional projects to present them to the conference and to work on securing the needed financing to implement them, including tourism projects which have immediate economic revenues, and including the development of tourism on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea after studies on that were completed...

The government continued to adopt policies aiming to achieve the economic adjustment programme for the years 1992/98. This was represented in achieving growth in the gross domestic product and addressing structural malfunctions that the Jordanian economy suffered from the end of the 1980s and following is a review of the performance of the national economy for this year...

Primary figures show that the real growth rates for the gross domestic product this year will reach 5.7 per cent, thus exceeding the targeted rate of 5.5 per cent. This is due to the rise in the growth rates in the expected fixed prices in some sectors which were estimated at 11 per cent in the transport and communications sector, 9.3 per cent in the convertible industries, and eight per cent in the tourism and trade sectors...

It is expected that the gross consumption as a percentage from the gross domestic product would drop from 98.1 per cent in 1993 to 97.1 per cent this year, which will lead to a rise in the rates of domestic savings to 2.9 per cent of the GDP, and that is considered a positive sign for overcoming the internal malfunction in the performance of the national economy...

The government has sought within a national programme to have a qualitative transition in the investment sector to encourage individual initiatives, encourage local investments and attract foreign investments through the following:

1. The creation of the investment window at the investments department...
2. Developing the industrial estates and allowing the private sector to participate in establishing them...
3. Revising legislations governing investments...
4. Preparing a new draft law on free zones aiming to offer more incentives and facilitating procedures to work on attracting new investments in addition to expanding the free zones this year in Al Quweira, Aqaba, the Queen Alia International Airport, Zarqa and approving the establishment of a free zone for new cars traders by the Jordanian Businessmen Association...
5. Establishing the Jordanian loan guarantees shareholding company with a capital of JD 7 million in partnership represented by the Internal Bank of Jordan, and the private sector...
6. Giving the agricultural sector due concern to encour-

age agricultural production and to provide the needed infrastructure and supporting farmers...

The most important measures taken by the government in the field of supporting investments and encouraging local industries and exports include the following:

- a. In the field of the income tax, all the profits of the national exports, commodities and services were exempted from the income tax, thus increasing their competitiveness.
- b. In the field of customs tariffs the following was done...

1. Exempting a large number of the inputs of the local industry of customs duties and reducing these duties on all electronic and electrical appliances and their parts as well as on car spare parts with the aim of encouraging investments in the assembly plants industries. Some 25 industrial ventures have benefited from these exemptions.

2. Exempting all transport vehicles weighing over four tonnes of customs duties which reduces the transport costs and reflects positively on the costs of the local industry...

c. In the field of the general tax on sales, large numbers of primary materials for the input of domestic industries, such as pharmaceuticals, medical material, processed food supplies, lime and bricks and heaters were exempted from the sales tax...

Because of the importance of the tourism sector in view of its revenues in direct income in foreign currencies... the government has given this sector due concern that was reflected in activating the process of marketing Jordanian tourism in the domestic and foreign markets and developing touristic locations, especially in Petra. It was agreed to establish a regional council on the development and organisation of Petra... and the private sector has commenced the establishment of nine hotels in Petra which will provide 600 job opportunities, in addition to improving services related to this sector in all areas of the Kingdom... the government has finalised a comprehensive tourism development plan for the southern Aqaba beach and several companies have offered to establish hotels there.

Unemployment and poverty:

The government continues to have concern over the problems of unemployment and poverty since they are of the main challenges facing the economic and social development processes. The government has managed to curb the two phenomena through the following procedures:

1. Stepping up efforts to improve the investment climate and achieve good growth rates in the GDP to offer more job opportunities and improve incomes.
2. Creating about 6,500 new job opportunities within government departments in addition to opportunities provided by the capital projects.
3. Increasing allocations for the National Aid Fund (NAF) and supporting it to expand its services. The number of families benefiting from NAF's services has totalled 40,000 in 1994, com-

pared to 33,000 in 1993.

4. Activating the role of the development and employment fund through providing soft loans to small income-generating projects.

5. Expanding the financing of income generating projects in the countryside and the badia regions...

6. Enhancing the role of the Vocational Training Corporation...

It is worth mentioning here that there was a rise in the unemployment rate among the holders of scientific certificates, especially females, and at the same time the labour market was suffering from the scarcity of the workforce supply in specialised technical professions... meaning that there is a structural and behavioural unemployment in the Jordanian labour market...

The balance of payments:

The primary foreign trade figures show that the deficit in the trade balance this year has shown a seven per cent improvement over 1993 and this is due to a tangible rise in the value of the national commodity exports, which rose from JD 865 million in 1993 to JD 1,006 million in 1994, and that is an increase of 16 per cent. Regarding imports, they have risen from JD 2,480 million in 1993 to JD 2,480 million this year, reflecting a rise of 1.2 per cent.

It is expected that the surplus in the services balance would register a slight retreat of 1.7 per cent from JD 878 million in 1993 to JD 863 million in 1994...

It is expected that there would be a drop in the current account from JD 435 million in 1993 to JD 375 in 1994, or a 14 per cent drop. Thus, the current account deficit rate of the GDP will drop from 11.2 per cent in 1993 to 8.8 per cent in 1994...

Monetary and credit policy:

The Central Bank of Jordan has continued this year to adopt monetary and credit policies aiming to preserve internal and external monetary stability and to activate the role of the monetary market. The CBJ has taken large strides in the field of moving towards indirect administrative techniques in the monetary policy through issuing CBJ bonds as a principal means to manage this policy.

The adoption of this policy has led to containing the monetary expansion to make it within the limit of 6.2 per cent during the first 10 months of the current year compared to an 8.1 per cent expansion in 1993. At the same time it was possible to give the private sector a suitable level of domestic credits with an increase of 18 per cent, as a result of the improvement in the performance of the government's monetary performance this year...

The Kingdom's reserves of foreign currency and the dinar exchange rate. The Kingdom's reserves of foreign currencies have been exposed to repeated pressures during the first half of this year as a result of the unstable political conditions prevailing in the region. This caused a drop in the reserves in the end of June equalling JD 215 million compared to the end of 1993. But the problem was contained.

General level of prices:

The actual statements of the first 10 months of 1994 show that the rise in the general level of prices did not exceed 3 per cent although the prices of food supplies have exceeded that rate, especially the prices of fruits and vegetables during the last two months of the period, and most of this is attributed to seasonal reasons...

The financial market:

It is expected that the volume of trade at the Amman Financial Market will reach about JD 500 million against JD 969 million in 1993, meaning a significant decline of 48.4 per cent. This was accompanied by a retreat in the stock market price index, which dropped from 138.5 points in the end of 1993 to 145.6 points in the end of November this year.

Of the most important reasons that led to this great retreat was the period of uncertainty prevailing in the region and investors' tendency to focus on shares of new companies, whose volume has risen from JD 92 million in 1993 to JD 285 million in 1994; that is an increase of 210 per cent. This rise in the volume of new issued shares emphasised the soundness of the government's policies in the field of encouraging investments which actively contributes to fighting unemployment.

General finances:

The government was keen to adopt financial policies aiming to continue the growth process, enhance self-reliance, decrease the budget deficit... rationalise government expenditure, encourage investments and update and develop financial legislations in a way conforming to the requirements of the coming stage through the following:

1. Continuing to adopt the self-reliance policy...
2. Enacting the general sales tax law...
3. Reducing customs duties on some commodities...
4. Drafting several amended laws...
5. Implementing strict financial monitoring...

Foreign and domestic debts:

The government continued its efforts; aiming to reduce the burdens of serving foreign debts... and obtained soft loans with low interest rates to support the Jordanian balance of payments and carried out vital development projects.

The 1994 achievements can be summarised as follows:

1. The government signed June 28 an agreement with the Paris Club (on rescheduling \$1212 million)...
2. Foreign debts were reduced by writing off \$831 million of the Kingdom's debts as follows: \$702 million of debts to the U.S. \$74 million of debts to the U.K. \$50 million of debts to Germany \$5 million of debts to France.

and the Kingdom's reserves of foreign currency and \$282 million to finance development projects.

As a result of the aforementioned it is expected the Kingdom's foreign debts by the end of this year will total \$5.55 billion compared to \$6 billion in the end of 1993.

Internal debts:

By the end of 1994, internal debts have dropped to JD 1,089 million compared to JD 1,102 million in the end of 1993.

The new age the region and the world are facing and the developments dictated by the political and economic developments will have direct impact on the economies of the region's countries, and namely Jordan. To be able to deal with these developments, the guidelines for Jordan's political and economic policies at the various international, Arab, regional and national levels can be defined as the following:

At the international level:

1. Explaining Jordan's position on national, regional and international issues in a convincing manner to enhance Jordan's status at all levels and to enable us to obtain the required support.
2. Seeking to reduce the volume of foreign debts...
3. Continuing efforts to obtain contributions from the international community to finance local and regional projects...
4. Taking serious and swift steps to sign a partnership agreement with the European Union (EU) and continuing work to consolidate relations with other international economic blocs...
5. Paying due attention to the question of compensations for Jordanian expatriates who returned to their country in the wake of the Gulf war...

At the regional level:

1. Active participation in drawing the region's economic map.
2. Playing a pioneering role in crystallising regional projects...
3. Continuous follow-up of the implementation of resolutions taken by the economic summit conference held in Casablanca.
4. Preparing for the Amman Economic Summit...

At the Arab level:

1. Seeking an acceptable level of Arab integration formulas...
2. Working on mending fences between Jordan and other Arab countries...
3. Affirming the importance of political and economic coordination with the Palestinian National Authority and supporting its efforts to obtain international financing for the reconstruction of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

At the national level:

1. Stressing that the state's role is to organise the economic life, to work on enhancing the role of the market and to activate the supply and demand mechanism...
2. Encouraging individual initiatives and the private sector...

3. Enhancing integration between the private and public sectors and expanding the role of the private sector...

4. Benefiting from the situation resulting from signing the peace treaty...

As mentioned, the financial policy has reflected these principles as being one of the tools of the economic policy through the following:

- a. Tax reforms...
- b. The government's refraining from competing with the private sector...
- c. Reducing burdens of serving foreign debts...
- d. Continuing work on reducing the deficit in the budget...

In line with the economic restructuring programme, the government has made provisions to help attain that goal in the 1995 budget plan, which aims at achieving the following:

1. Realising 6 per cent economic growth in real terms.
2. Retaining the present price rates with a maximum annual increase of 4 per cent.
3. Pursuing the process of augmenting the Kingdom's foreign exchange reserves.
4. Pursuing efforts to increase exports and reduce the rate of imports.
5. Reducing the margin of deficit.
6. Increasing savings from the public sector performance from 1.2 per cent in 1994 to 3.2 per cent in 1995 in terms of the gross domestic product.
7. Intensifying efforts to reduce foreign debts.
8. Giving special attention to investments.
9. Rationalising overall consumption.
10. Pursuing efforts to reform public administration institutions.

The 1995 fiscal budget conforms with the national economic reform programme but it also takes into account the requirements of the peace era by including a special clause for promised aid, amounting to JD 390 million.

The government has already received positive pledges of aid, the main one coming from the U.S. president in his address to Parliament.

Following are the main principles of the draft budget:

1. Pursuing efforts to ensure self-reliance.
2. Increasing the drive towards reducing the deficit in the budget.
3. Decentralisation.
4. Following intensified efforts for the development of public administration work.
5. Cancelling any exemptions of customs duty or sales tax that government departments used to enjoy.
6. Ensuring an infrastructure for the national economy.
7. Continuing subsidies on basic food commodities.
8. Giving due attention to supplies for the Jordanian Armed Forces and the Security Services.
9. Giving attention to improving the living conditions of the retired servicemen.
10. Reexamining the military pension law in a bid to improve pensioners' living conditions.

The general revenues have been estimated at JD 1,624 million, registering an increase of 16.5 per cent over the 1994 budget. The balance shows that the 1995 budget will have a deficit of JD 30 million.

Budget debate promises tough test for the Majali government

(Continued from page 1)

can the present government carry it out.

"The government's position is not comfortable," said the influential deputy.

"It will be difficult inside the (financial) committee and in the House; they are not happy with the government's performance or the background of the budget."

The resignation of Mr. Hindawi, deputies said, has hurt Dr. Majali's government and its effect on the House would be reflected once the floor is opened for the budget debate. One deputy noted that the House debate will not be restricted to the budget but will include the peace treaty, the Hindawi resignation among others.

The draft budget was referred to the House Financial Committee, which is headed by former Industry Minister Ali Abul Ragheb, for deliberation. After that the committee will present the budget with its own recommendations to the full House for debate and a vote.

"Mr. Hindawi is a respected politician and his resignation and the language of his resignation letter has definitely shaken confidence in the government," said a deputy critic of the Majali government. "Hindawi accused the government of lacking direction in domestic affairs and adopting policies that endangered the country and its interests."

While it is too early to predict the outcome of the vote on the 1995 draft budget, the Majali team is expected to face a tough time during the House debate.

without having a solid financial foundation.

On Wednesday, though, Dr. Majali sought to play down these expectations.

"We are now entering an era of hard and diligent work in the course of regaining our rights and honouring our commitments which among other things require from us to be well-prepared on the domestic front and to confront and deal with our painful problems," Dr. Majali, who listed unemployment and poverty as the country's major concerns, said.

The 1995 budget, which Dr. Majali described as one of the most ambitious in Jordan's history, reflects a 10 per cent increase over last year's budget of JD1.5 billion with a deficit of JD50 million. The JD50 million deficit is a dramatic drop from 1994's JD300 million.

Minister of Finance Sami Gammoh, who presented the 1995 draft budget to the House, said the government will try to achieve a growth rate of six per cent in gross national product (GNP) next year, compared with 5.7 per cent in 1994, and keep inflation at four per cent.

The budget, with a heavy emphasis on investment, includes JD833 million for public investment in infrastructure and development projects, representing 40 per cent of the budget revenue.

While it is too early to predict the outcome of the vote on the 1995 draft budget, the Majali team is expected to face a tough time during the House debate.

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Business & Finance

business daily beat
A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Ministry of Supply saves about JD 500,000

Large numbers of people preferred not to use Ministry of Supply coupons to buy Vietnamese rice and opted to buy other kinds of rice at higher prices. Merchants have declined to sell sugar for the rice coupons and even declined to sell better quality rice against the ministry coupons (for Vietnamese rice) plus the price difference. The consumer refusal to use the coupons enabled the Ministry of Supply to save more than JD 500,000 (Al Dustour).

After awarding a tender to widen the entrance to the city of Aqaba, the Ministry of Public Works is now engaged in preparing to build new roads in Aqaba and a 65-kilometre road that will link Wadi Araba with the Desert Road, passing through the Dish area (Al Aswaj).

A former agriculture minister calls for a reconsideration of the set up, work and objectives of the Ministry of Agriculture. He says that some agricultural institutions, such as the Cooperative Organisation, are not needed any more and have become a burden on the national economy (Al Dustour).

The Arab Maritime Bridge Company will have in 15 months' time a new administration building in Aqaba under a JD 969,458 contract signed with a contracting firm. The work also involves building villas within the vicinity of the project for the company's staff (Sawt Al Shaab).

Adnan Al Mufti, board chairman of Jordan Express Tourist Transport (JETT) is making contacts to expand the fleet of tourist buses to meet a tourism boom expected soon (Sawt Al Shaab).

The Orphans' Fund provided JD 4.5 million for murabaha (profit-sharing) investments from the beginning of the year until the end of November 1994. The investments were spread over 1,702 murabaha schemes. The institution has recently bought 18.5 dunums of land in Aqaba to build residential apartment and commercial markets (Al Ra'i).

A total of 106,139 employment applications were presented to the Civil Service Commission until the end of last month. Of the total, only 5,081 were hired. Among the applicants there were 223 with a doctorate degree (six were hired) and 1,059 with a masters degree (301 were hired) (Sawt Al Shaab).

A new company, which has not yet decided on an official name for it in English, is being established as a holding company with a JD 1.5 million capital. The entity, whose name could be translated from Arabic as the Jordanian National Company, aims at investing in shares and stocks among other objectives. Founders who have subscribed to 75 per cent of the capital include: Union Bank for Savings and Investment (112,500 shares), Fouad Kostantine (112,500 shares), Fawzi Shnoudah (93,750 shares), George Abu Khader (75,000 shares), Jordan-Gulf Bank (75,000 shares), Wasim Magdoh (63,750 shares), Suhail Magdoh (60,000 shares) and the International Arab Union Insurance (37,500 shares). The remaining 25 per cent of the capital will be floated for public subscription soon (Al Aswaj).

A detailed study concluded that the negative effects of the recent customs tariff reductions outweighed the positive effects and that the measures did not abide by the 30-50 per cent range of protection for local industry (Al Aswaj).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 07/12/1994				
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	TRADED VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK	120	22,110	184.000	184.250
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	11,550	52,742	4.590	4.550
BANK OF JORDAN	6,470	25,370	3.900	3.930
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	2,350	7,003	2.980	2.980
THE HOUSING BANK	1,350	7,480	5.600	5.550
JORDAN KUNAFI BANK	552	1,662	3.050	2.980
JORDAN GULF BANK	6,750	11,236	1.670	1.660
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	11,172	41,038	3.720	3.650
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	1,550	3,906	2.540	2.520
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	500	2,475	4.950	4.950
BEIT ALMAL SAVING/INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	265	869	3.320	3.270
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	116,588	178,990	1.520	1.540
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	56	214	3.820	3.830
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	5,317	9,379	1.750	1.770
JORDAN INSURANCE	1,000	3,400	3.400	3.400
VERUSALAH INSURANCE	320	1,342	4.300	4.200
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	1,550	3,906	2.540	2.520
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	7,250	11,368	1.570	1.560
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	14,671	22,299	1.520	1.520
JORDAN HINER MINERAL	200	310	1.480	1.550
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	6,450	33,593	5.300	5.190
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	10,400	33,827	3.260	3.220
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	905	2,242	2.490	2.500
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	1,500	2,050	1.400	1.360
JORDAN GULF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	10,075	12,548	1.280	1.240
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	275	291	1.090	1.060
MACHINERY EQUIP. REPAIRING & MAINTENANCE	2,250	1,845	0.830	0.820
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALRAI	200	2,330	11.950	11.700
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	27,500	68,758	2.510	2.500
ARAB TRADER FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	1,000	3,370	3.370	3.370
JORDANIAN EXPOSITES INVESTMENT HOLDING	1,500	2,085	1.390	1.390
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	71,624	207,025	2.880	2.860
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	1,350	3,656	2.730	2.670
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	590	5,484	9.360	9.260
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	950	4,703	5.010	4.950
THE JORDAN WOODSTOCK HILLS	1,350	10,935	8.150	8.100
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	27,477	164,428	6.140	5.870
JORDAN DAIRY	574	1,292	2.250	2.260
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	450	1,310	2.900	2.910
JORDAN PAPER & CARDBOARD FACTORIES	1,000	4,180	4.120	4.180
JORDAN DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	6,100	106,336	17.450	17.450
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	10,000	10,214	1.040	1.030
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	1,050	7,343	7.000	7.000
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	11,926	11,631	1.000	0.960
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	5,250	7,423	1.430	1.410
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	1,000	4,530	4.530	4.530
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	2,450	7,058	2.840	2.850
JORDAN ROCKWOOL INDUSTRIES	8,500	13,585	1.600	1.570
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JINCO	3,500	2,935	0.850	0.830
GRAND TOTAL		514,689	1,710,335	

Financial Jordan Times			
In co-operation with			
Cairo Amman Bank			
U.S. Dollar in International Markets			
Currency	New York (Close)	Tokyo (Close)	London (Close)
	6/12/94	7/12/94	
Sterling Pound	1.5623	1.5635**	
Deutsche Mark	1.5124	1.5664	
Swiss Franc	1.3878	1.3831**	
French Franc	5.3995	5.3808**	
Japanese Yen	100.10	99.77	
European Currency Unit	1.2130	1.2172**	
USD Per 100			
European Opening at 8:00 a.m. GMT			
Eurocurrency Interest Rates			
Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTHS 12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.87	6.06	6.50 7.06
Sterling Pound	5.68	6.25	6.75 7.25
Deutsche Mark	5.12	5.12	5.25 5.50
Swiss Franc	3.87	4.00	4.25 4.56
French Franc	5.31	5.50	5.75 6.12
Japanese Yen	2.18	2.18	2.31 2.56
European Currency Unit	5.75	5.87	6.12 6.62
Interest rate for 1 month exceeding 1.5% Dollar 1.0000 per cent.			
Precious Metals			
Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal USD/Oz JD/Gm
Gold	377.00	7.50	Silver 4.68 0.105
21 Karat			

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin			
Date: 7/12/1994			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
U.S. Dollar	0.7010	0.7050	
Sterling Pound	1.0954	1.1009	
Deutsche Mark	0.4472	0.4494	
Swiss Franc	0.5292	0.5318	
French Franc	0.1392	0.1309	
Japanese Yen	0.7018	0.7053	
Dutch Guilder	0.3993	0.4013	
Swedish Krona	*****	*****	
Italian Lira	0.0433	0.0435	
Belgian Franc	*****	*****	
Per 100			
Other Currencies			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
Bahraini Dinar	1.8430	1.8600	
Lebanese Lira	0.041355	0.042585	
Saudi Riyal	0.1858	0.1878	
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3050	2.3630	
Qatari Riyal	0.1913	0.1927	
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2150	
Omani Riyal	1.8050	1.8220	
UAE Dirham	0.1903	0.1922	
Greek Drachma	0.2685	0.3185	
Cypriot Pound	1.3825	1.5115	
Per 100			

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Per 100			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
Bahraini Dinar	1.8430	1.8600	
Lebanese Lira	0.041355	0.042585	
Saudi Riyal	0.1858	0.1878	
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3050	2.3630	
Qatari Riyal	0.1913	0.1927	
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2150	
Omani Riyal	1.8050	1.8220	
UAE Dirham	0.1903	0.1922	
Greek Drachma	0.2685	0.3185	
Cypriot Pound	1.3825	1.5115	
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	1.5672/82	Deutsche marks	1.7552/62
	1.3240/50	Dutch guilders	32.22/26
	5.3842/92	Swiss francs	1618.8/9.8
	7.5100/00	Belgian francs	99.90/00
	6.8290/40	French francs	161.8/9.8
	6.1355/05	Italian lire	2036.00/00
	11.5668/78	Japanese yen	161.8/9.8
One sterling	\$1.5668/78	Swedish crowns	136.5/05
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		Danish crowns	136.5/05

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Italy to extend \$3m for feasibility study of Red Sea-Dead Sea canal

By Sama Abu Sharar
Special to the Jordan Times



Romualdo Bettini

AMMAN — Italy will extend \$3 million to Jordan for a feasibility study of the Red Sea-Dead Sea canal, the Italian ambassador in Jordan, Romualdo Bettini, said.

Italy offered to finance the study of a canal that joins the Red Sea to the Dead Sea back in January 1993, the ambassador told the Jordan Times in an interview.

The Red Sea-Dead Sea canal project aims at restoring the natural level of the Dead Sea which has been falling steadily in the past few decades due to the diversion of the Jordan River water, the expansion of mineral extraction from its waters, and evaporation. The project will essentially divert water from the Red Sea to the 391-metre below sea level Dead Sea through a pipeline and canal.

According to a paper presented by the Israeli side during the peace negotiations, the project will result in generating electricity power, enlarging the coastline in the Gulf of Aqaba paving the way for the evolution of tourism and, finally, increasing the sources of potable water through desalination of sea

water.

According to Ambassador Bettini, the initial stage of the project, which is about to begin, includes a pre-feasibility study that the World Bank has agreed to finance. The study will cost \$450,000 and will take six months to accomplish.

According to the ambassador, this study will provide details on the basic aims of the project: "Water, energy and desalination." The pre-feasibility study will also look at social and economic aspects of the project like the development of tourism in the area and fishery.

This initial World Bank study will be followed by a feasibility study that would cost \$3.6 million (Italy is ready to pay \$3 million) and will be completed in 18 months, the ambassador said.

The feasibility study will determine the possibility of implementing the project, the advantages and the disadvantages of the project and the difficulties that lie ahead.

"The study should be able to tackle the aspects of bringing the salted water from Aqaba to the Dead Sea,

generating energy and using this energy for desalination purposes," Ambassador Bettini said.

It should also be able to determine the cost of implementing such a project (the actual estimate is \$2 billion), and any environmental damage that could occur.

While he said it was premature to speculate on the sources for funding the project, the ambassador said he expected the international private sector would be "directly involved" in the funding of the actual project when it kicks off in a two years time.

He thought that those companies would exert pressure on their governments and on international organisations to raise part of the project's cost.

Hariri signs \$2.26 billion in reconstruction legislation

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri has signed draft legislation earmarking \$2.26 billion for rebuilding Lebanon as part of a Syrian-brokered deal to keep him in power, government sources said Wednesday.

The legislation signed Tuesday is expected to be approved by parliament following the deal reached in Damascus Monday during talks between Mr. Hariri, his key political opponent House Speaker Nabih Berri and Syrian leaders.

Mr. Hariri said Tuesday he had withdrawn the resignation he had tendered last week in the face of mounting opposition to his policies and accusations of corruption within his Soldeire company, which is trying to rebuild Beirut.

The funds are part of a \$12

billion, 10-year reconstruction programme dubbed Horizon 2000 which Mr. Berri had refused to include in the 1995 budget.

Under the deal, the Horizon 2000 programme will be delinked from the 1995 budget although some of the projects will be examined separately by the deputies for a quick implementation.

The bills earmark \$600 million for low-income housing, \$530 million for hospitals and health care, \$257 million for agriculture and \$83 million for the revamping of administrative sectors.

A total of \$500 million are also to be set aside to reinforce the internal security forces with equipment and manpower while \$260 million are to go to the construction of new industrial zones.

Deputies in parliamentary committees had rejected the

inclusion of Horizon 2000 in the 1995 budget charging that 90 per cent of the funds was destined for infrastructure projects, with too little for productive sectors and social schemes.

The MPs also demanded to specify who was funding the projects, fearing that the Hariri government was accumulating public debts that would drag down the country's newly-recovered economic stability.

According to the prime minister, Lebanon has secured loans worth \$1.8 billion, half of which already been spent.

2nd round of Jordan Soccer Championship kicks off today

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Kingdom's top soccer teams return to action Thursday when the second round of the First Division Soccer Championship kicks off after a three-week break.

For the first time in years, no team has taken a clearcut lead, making the remaining 66 matches of the competition more interesting as between the top five teams there is a mere four point difference.

At the end of the first round, Al Wihdat topped the standings with 19 points, followed by Al Hussein, 18. Al Faisali and Al Ramtha tied with 16 Al Jazireh were fifth with 15.

The other teams lagging in last four places facing relegation were Al Arabi, Shabab Al Hussein, Al Karmel and Al Jeel. Al Ahli and Kufsum maintained a halfway position, while Al Qadissieh exchanged places with Al Arabi and joined them in the 11th week after languishing in 9th place for some time.

A total of 186 goals were scored in the past 66 matches, a relatively high number, putting the average at 2.8 per match. The number of bookings was also high, at 184, with 10 red card suspensions, four of which for Al Karmel players.

The competition is scheduled to be completed with the Hussein-Faisali match on Jan. 27.

In the upcoming 12th week, titleholders Al Faisali play Al Ahli; Al Jazireh clash with Al Wihdat; Al Jeel meet Shabab Al Hussein; Al Arabi take on Al Ramtha; Al Qadissieh play Kufsum and Al Karmel face Al Hussein.

Here's an analysis of the competing teams as they enter the second round of the competition.

Al Wihdat
The team with the most avoid fans. Al Wihdat last won the title in 1991. The former champions

alternated their lead at the top with Al Hussein before ending the first round with a one point lead.

Al Wihdat are joined by many promising players this year, including Abdullah Abu Zame'h and Ali Jum'a.

The team had a low scoring record at 14-3 and their best striker was Jihad Abdul Mun'em with four goals.

Al Wihdat remain the only unbeaten team in the competition, winning eight and drawing in three of their matches.

Al Wihdat's most decisive results were 1-1 with Al Hussein, 1-0 over Al Faisali, 0-0 with Al Ramtha and 1-0 over Al Jazireh. However, they failed to score better against lowly teams, like their mere 1-0 win over last placed Al Jeel, 2-0 over Al Karmel, 1-0 over Al Qadissieh and Kufsum. They also drew 0-0 with Al Ahli and scored 3-1 wins over Al Arabi and Shabab Al Hussein and 2-0 over Al Karmel.

Al Hussein

Al Hussein lost the lead to Al Wihdat in the 11th week after a goalless draw against titleholders Al Faisali which paved the way for Al Wihdat's reign at the top after a 3-1 win over Al Arabi.

Al Hussein are the top scoring team so far with a 30-10 record.

They are eagerly anticipating clinching the title for the first time, and have entered the competition with good morale after defeating Al Faisali in August to win their first major title — the 1994 Federation Shield.

Al Hussein's most impressive results were 5-2 and 5-1 wins over Kufsum and Al Qadissieh, and 4-0 victories over Al Arabi, Shabab Al Hussein, and Al Karmel.

Their only defeat was 2-0 to Al Ramtha. They were held to draws 0-0 with Al Faisali and 1-1 with Al Wihdat. They defeated Al

Jazireh 1-0, Al Ahli 4-3 and Al Jeel 2-1. Their top scorers were Munib Gharaibeh, Aref Hussein and Khaled Khatatbeh with four goals each.

Al Faisali

The second most scoring team with a 21-6 record, the titleholders remained in third place after a surprisingly inconsistent form. Nevertheless they only lost one match to Al Wihdat. Al Faisali had a bad start to the season, drawing 1-1 with Al Ahli then losing 1-0 to Al Wihdat in the first two matches.

They had goalless draws with Al Ramtha and Al Hussein and barely beat Al Jazireh 2-1.

Their wins were 2-0 over Kufsum, 5-0 over Al Arabi, 3-2 over Shabab Al Hussein, 3-0 over Al Karmel and 3-0 over Al Jeel. Their top scorer was Jiryes Tadros with 7 goals.

Al Ramtha

Al Ramtha came in fourth place on goal difference as they drew with Al Faisali in overall points and had the same results (6 wins, 4 draws, and one defeat).

Their 0-0 ties with Al Faisali and Al Wihdat, and 2-0 win over Al Hussein kept Al Ramtha among the top five during the first round.

Their only defeat was 1-0 to Al Ahli. They drew 1-1 with Al Jazireh and Al Arabi and defeated Kufsum 4-0, Al Qadissieh 2-0, Shabab Al Hussein 2-1, Al

Karmel 5-0, Al Jeel 2-1. Striker Mouaffaq Abu Hdeib was Al Ramtha's and the league's top scorer with 10 goals.

Al Jazireh

Al Jazireh were one of the most consistent teams during the first round.

While maintaining the image of a lowly team, often threatened with relegation throughout past seasons, Al Jazireh defied expectations and remained among the top five after scoring a total of seven wins, including five consecutive ones; they scored 1-0 wins over Al Ahli, Kufsum and Al Arabi, 2-1 over Al Qadissieh and Al Karmel, 3-1 over Shabab Al Hussein and 4-0 over Al Jeel.

Their only draw was 1-1 with Al Ramtha. They lost 1-0 to Al Hussein and Al Wihdat and 2-1 to Al Faisali.

Their top scorer was Murad Hasan with 7 goals.

Al Ahli

Al Ahli hope to improve their form and advance their standing after disappointing their fans throughout most of the competition.

Despite drawing with Al Wihdat 0-0 and Al Faisali 1-1, Al Ahli were upset 4-0 by lowly newcomers Shabab Al Hussein, 1-0 by Al Jazireh and 3-1 by Kufsum.

Their most important win was 1-0 over Al Ramtha. They also beat Al

Jeel 3-0, Al Karmel 1-0, and Al Arabi 2-0, lost 4-3 to Al Hussein and drew 1-1 with Al Qadissieh to finish sixth after the first round of the competition.

Their top scorer was Nart Yadaj with 7 goals.

Kufsum

The newcomer to the division made an explosive start in the competition when they scored three consecutive big wins in their first three matches, defeating Al Qadissieh 3-2, Shabab Al Hussein 4-2, and Al Jeel 2-1. They later also beat Al Karmel 4-1.

An important win was their 3-1 upset of Al Ahli. Kufsum lost 1-0 to Al Wihdat, 3-2 to Al Hussein, 2-0 to Al Faisali and 4-0 to Al Ramtha.

Their top scorer was Youssef Obeidat, who is also the league's second best so far with eight goals.

Al Qadissieh

A top four team last season, Al Qadissieh languished in 9th place before moving to eighth in the final week after a 1-0 win over last-placed Al Jeel.

The team's only other win was 3-1 over Al Arabi. They drew 1-1 with Al Faisali, Al Ahli, Shabab Al Hussein and Al Karmel.

Al Qadissieh lost five matches: 1-0 to Al Wihdat, 5-1 to Al Hussein, 2-0 to Al Ramtha, 2-1 to Al Jazireh and 3-2 to Kufsum.

Their top scorer was Mustafa Adam with 3 goals.

Al Arabi

Although having a relatively good start to the season, Al Arabi are now in the last four threatened with relegation and must therefore improve their record and hope to maintain a halfway standing to stay in the prestigious league.

They are now tied with Al Qadissieh with 8 points but dropped to ninth place in the 11th week on goal difference.

Their only wins were

over the last placed three teams. They drew 1-1 with Al Ramtha and Kufsum but lost 3-1 to Al Wihdat, 4-0 to Al Hussein, 5-0 to Al Faisali, 1-0 to Al Jazireh, 2-0 to Al Ahli and 3-1 to Al Qadissieh.

Their top scorer was Ayman Al Omari with six goals.

Shabab Al Hussein

Their only win was a surprising 4-0 over Al Ahli; however the team failed to improve their 10th place standing after losing 7 matches and managing only three 1-1 draws with Al Jeel, Al Karmel and Al Qadissieh.

Maher Sarsour was their top scorer with five goals.

Al Karmel

The other newcomer scored only victory in the 10th week defeating Al Jeel 3-2. Their 1-1 draws with Al Qadissieh and Shabab Al Hussein enabled them to move into 11th place. Losing eight matches has kept them in clear danger of relegation.

Their top scorer was Nizar Shamekh with two goals.

Al Jeel

The only winless team in the competition, Al Jeel lost 1-0 matches and earned only one point in the standings after a 1-1 draw with Shabab Al Hussein.

The team has the worst scoring record at 6-27. Their top scorer was Zakariya Al Shibel with two goals.

Top scorers

- 1) Mouaffaq Abu Hdeib (Al Ramtha) 10
- 2) Youssef Obeidat (Kufsum) 8
- 3) Jiryes Tadros (Al Faisali), Murad Hasan (Al Jazireh), Nart Yadaj (Al Ahli) 7
- 4) Ayman Al Omari (Al Arabi) 6
- 5) Husam Hammash (Al Ahli), Maher Sarsour (Shabab Al Hussein) 5



Pete Sampras

Becker battles to win; Sampras breezes through

MUNICH (AP) — The sight of Jaime Yzaga on the other side of the net brought back some unpleasant memories for Pete Sampras. He wanted to get rid of them fast and he did, in record time.

Sampras beat Yzaga 6-2, 6-4 Tuesday to open the \$6 million Compaq Grand Slam Cup, the match lasted 58 minutes and it was the quickest victory in the history of the tournament, which is in its fifth year.

While the top-ranked Sampras hurried to get past the man who beat him at the U.S. Open, Boris Becker battled his way from behind to outlast Wayne Ferreira, who beat Becker in the opening round here last year.

The German, cheered on by 11,000 fans from the city where he lives, won 5-7, 6-4, 6-3 in one hour, 54 minutes to advance to the quarterfinals.

Michael Chang beat Alberto Berasategui 6-1, 7-5, while Goran Ivanisevic defeated Jonas Bjorkman 6-4, 6-2, in the last match of the day, hitting 16 aces.

Ivanisevic is serving a two-month ban by the ATP for accumulating too many fines for code of conduct violations in a year. But this event is considered an exhibition tournament by the ATP since it is not part of its tour and Ivanisevic was cleared to play.

In the quarterfinals, Sampras will play Chang, while

Becker will meet Ivanisevic. Sampras was beaten by Yzaga in five sets in the round of 16 at the U.S.

"Every year I tell them it would be better tennis to watch and to play if they slow it down, but it seems like the same fast court," said Sampras, who won the inaugural tournament in 1990.

Sampras dominated the ATP Tour this year, winning two Grand Slam titles — the Australian Open and Wimbledon. He also clinched the ATP Tour world championship last month in Frankfurt for his 10th title of the year.

With his two Grand Slam titles, Sampras will collect a \$500,000 bonus — \$250,000 for each title. The winner's purse here is \$1.5 million and Sampras could clear \$2 million.

Yzaga, like all first-round losers, collected \$100,000.

The tournament invites players with the best records in the four Grand Slam tournaments in the world, and nine out of the top 10 players in the world are here. French Open champion Sergie Bruguera and U.S. Open champion Andrei Agassi were to play later Wednesday.

But a searing forehead down the line set up a break and set point for Becker and when Ferreira hit a backhand into the net, the German was back in the match.

Spanish teams crash out of UEFA quarterfinals

PARIS (AFP) — Real Madrid, Athletic Bilbao and Deportivo La Coruna crashed out of the UEFA Cup Tuesday on a night which saw Italian and German clubs move smoothly into the quarterfinals.

Real Madrid set the scene for a series of Spanish disasters when they fell to an injury-time sucker punch in their third round home encounter with rank Danish outsiders Odense.

The Spanish side, who had won the away leg 3-2 with a last-minute goal of their own from Michael Laudrup, looked sure of qualification on Tuesday — even after slipping 1-0 behind to a 72nd minute goal from Ulrik Pedersen.

But they — and 55,000 spectators in the Bernabeu Stadium — were left stunned

as Morten Bisgaard netted the winner in the final seconds.

The Spanish league leaders had gone into the game without suspended Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano, the key man behind their league form with 12 goals in 13 games and who also scored in the first leg in Denmark.

His scoring prowess was badly missed as the Spaniards wasted a batful of chances in the opening period, Carsten Dethlefsen responding for the visitors by rattling the bar from 25 yards.

Argentinian Jorge Valdano, whose side top the Spanish table on goal difference, will come under severe pressure after the shock defeat, ending the club's hopes of emulating their successes in the competition in 1985 and 1986.

Spanish woe continued when Athletic Bilbao, conquerors of English Premiership side Newcastle United, lost 4-2 at Parma after winning the first leg 1-0.

The visitors were rocked back on their heels after inform Gianfranco Zola, who scored twice at the weekend to keep Parma top of the Italian league, opened with a neat goalmouth move, slipping round a defender and sidestepping the ball under goalkeeper Juan Jose Valencia.

Two goals from Dino Baggio and a fourth from the excellent Fernando Couto put the issue beyond doubt, although the Spaniards managed to score two late goals through Vales and Julien Guerrero.

Deportivo came closest of the Spanish sides to reaching

the last eight — taking the overall lead against Borussia Dortmund when Alfredo cleverly lobbed Stefan Klos in a dramatic first period of extra-time.

The Germans, 0-1 down after the first leg, were level overall after 90 minutes thanks to a goal from midfielder Michael Zorc, who latched on to a headed pass from Andreas Moeller five minutes into the second half.

Alfredo's goal would have killed off most teams, but the Germans stuck to the task in hand and, in a thrilling finale in front of 36,000 excited fans, they scored twice in as many minutes through Karl-Heinz Riedel and Riedel with just five minutes of extra-time left to play.

In Tuesday's other UEFA matches, Gianluca Vialli was on target yet again to help

Juventus clinch a 2-1 home win and an overall 5-2 victory against Austrian opponents Admira Wacker.

Lazio, already 2-1 up from the first leg, completed an Italian clean sweep by scoring another 2-1 win over Trabzonspor of Turkey.

In a home match played in pouring rain, Roberto Cravero opened the scoring after 25 minutes, and although Soner pulled the Turks level with a 72nd minute effort, Di Vaio, who had only been on the pitch for twelve minutes, put Lazio back in front.

German side Bayer Leverkusen duly saw off GSK Katowice with a crushing 8-1 aggregate scoreline. They won the second leg 4-0 — all of their goals coming in the first half.

Aikman to start for Cowboys

IRVING (AP) — The Dallas Cowboys won their last two games without troy Aikman. It appears they'll get a chance to win the next one with him.

"It's good to have our general back," wide receiver Michael Irvin said. "We've been putting up some points without him. Now that he's going to be back, there is no reason why we can't really put up some points."

Aikman missed two National Football League games with a sprained left knee but was in charge of the team Tuesday as the Cowboys prepared for Saturday's game against the Cleveland Browns at Texas stadium. "I plan on playing," Aikman said.

Third-stringer Jason Garrett won against the Green Bay Packers on Thanksgiving, and second-stringer Rodney Peete led the team to victory Sunday against the Philadelphia Eagles.

Jordan Times
Tel: 667171

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1st Division Basketball Championship

Six matches lined-up for weekend

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN—Basketball players have a hectic weekend ahead as six matches are lined-up in the First Division Basketball Championship which concludes next week.

The Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) decided to hold three matches Thursday after they were postponed last Saturday because of the snowy weather conditions.



Naser Alawneh



Ghaith Ennabi

Al Watani will take on tideholders Al Ahli, Al Jalil play Homentmen while Al Jazireh clash with former champions Al Orthodoxy in the battle for second place.

On Friday Al Jalil meet Al Ahli, Al Watani play Al Orthodoxy while Al Hussein host Homentmen.

While standings of most teams have become quite clear, two of the six matches are crucial to the teams.

Al Jazireh's clash with Al Orthodoxy might have had a different bearing on the second place battle, however, Al Orthodoxy seem to have secured the runner up spot at least after overcoming Al Jazireh 92-75 in the first round.

Al Jazireh's task is therefore somewhat hard to achieve as they have to score a victory with over 17 points to clinch second place.

Al Jazireh will have to be content with third place for the third consecutive year, after denying Al Jalil their former standings with 71-55 and 73-69 wins.

Another important clash will be Al Hussein's match against Homentmen.

As two teams will be relegated this year, Al Hussein find themselves fighting for their place among the prestigious group.

However, they are one step ahead of their placed opponents — Al Watani and Homentmen.

While Homentmen have already been relegated, Al Hussein's 79-76 win over Al Watani in the first round pushed the latter to the brink of relegation unless they score a win with over three points in their Dec. 12 match.

Therefore, Al Watani's players must be eagerly anticipating Al Hussein's loss to Homentmen Friday to make their task of avoiding relegation much easier.

Al Hussein had overcome Homentmen 67-54 in the first round. However, Homentmen's form has improved and their players have been giving it a hard fight despite their relegation. While they lost 74-49 to Al Watani in the first

round, the second round score was 89-76.

The results of the other four matches will not affect the standings, and are not expected to be very different than the first round.

Al Ahli will meet Al Watani who were fifth last season, but find themselves struggling to avoid relegation for the first time since they were promoted in 1986.

Al Ahli had won their first round match 130-67.

Meanwhile, Al Jalil will play Homentmen in Amman. Their first round match had ended 96-60 for Al Jalil who had won the first half with only two points 37-35.

Al Jalil will be again hosted by Al Ahli in Amman Friday. Their first round encounter had ended 96-69 for the tideholders.

Al Orthodoxy will play Al Watani in another match Friday. Their first round match had ended 107-59 for the former champions.

Al Ahli still lead the standings with an unbeaten record, and 16 points from eight matches. They are currently followed by Al Jazireh with 16 points from 9 matches, while Al Orthodoxy are third with 15 points from eight matches.

In the latest matches on Tuesday, Al Orthodoxy scored another big victory

over Homentmen 119-44; Al Jalil beat Al Watani 84-61 and Al Jazireh beat Al Hussein 99-51.

Although Al Jalil have been playing their last two matches without the guidance of their coach who quit last week after disagreements with the club's executive board, the Irbid team had no trouble overcoming Al Watani 41-27 in the first half.

Al Jalil relied on Nasser Bassam, Ra'ed Jaber, Omar Abdul Majid and Mohammad Abu Dheis to end the match with an expected win. Al Jalil had won their first round encounter 90-72.

Al Orthodoxy sailed through their match against Homentmen 119-44, as the latter's coach gave all bench players a chance to play while the team continued to miss the efforts of Vasken Ajemian who was a key player in past seasons. Al Orthodoxy had won their first round match 116-36.

Al Jazireh were just under the 100-point mark as they beat Al Hussein 99-51 in Amman. Both teams missed key players — Ghaith Ennabi and Naser Alawneh from Al Jazireh, and Hadi Al Sayes and Mustafa Al Kofahi from Al Hussein.

Their first round match had ended 94-76 for Al Jazireh.

Thursday's matches:
Watani vs. Ahli 7 p.m. Ahli Court
Jalil vs. Homentmen 5:30 p.m. Sports Palace
Jazireh vs. Orthodoxy 7 p.m. Sports Palace

Friday's matches:
Jalil vs. Ahli 5:30 p.m. Sports Palace
Orthodoxy vs. Watani 4 p.m. Sports Palace
Homentmen vs. Hussein 7 p.m. Yarmouk Court

STANDINGS

	P	W	L	SF	SA	Pts.
Ahli	8	8	—	888	439	16
Jazireh	9	7	2	784	647	16
Orthodoxy	8	7	1	784	454	15
Jalil	8	4	4	604	558	12
Watani	9	2	7	653	830	11
Hussein	9	2	7	522	827	11
Homentmen	9	—	9	442	926	9

Taiwan denies deal on Olympic vote

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan's top Olympic official denied Wednesday that Taipei had made a secret deal to vote for Sydney to host the 2000 Olympics instead of Beijing.

"I know nothing about the alleged secret deal with Sydney as the foreign press reported," state television quoted WU Ching-Kuo, Taiwan's representative on the International Olympic Committee (IOC), as saying.

"No form of pressure was imposed on the voting."

The Sydney Morning Herald newspaper said Australia secretly agreed to lobby for Taiwan to take part in a first summit of Asian-Pacific leaders in 1993, on condition that Taipei backed Sydney's Olympic bid.

Sydney snatched the right to hold the Olympic Games in 2000 from Beijing by a mere two votes in the final round of voting by IOC delegates in September last year.

The newspaper said Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating met Taiwanese government adviser Dr. Jeffrey Koo on August 13 last year, about six weeks before the key vote on who would host the games.

Keating "agreed to lobby U.S. President Bill Clinton, to invite a senior Taiwanese political figure to attend the (first) Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Seattle last November," the paper said.

In return Mr. Keating ... demanded that Taiwan deliver the vote of its International Olympic Committee member, Mr. Ching Kuo Wu, to Sydney instead of Beijing," it said.

Koo was not available for comment in Taipei.

A few days after his meeting with Keating and a week before the Olympics vote, Clinton announced that he would invite a senior Taiwanese minister to the Seattle APEC summit.

China's objections to Taiwan's membership of APEC had previously prevented its attendance at APEC forum meetings.

China bans 7 swimmers for drugs

BEIJING (AFP) — The Chinese Swimming Federation (CSF) has banned seven swimmers implicated in the Asian Games drug scandal from all competition for two years, CSF vice-president Yuan Jiawei announced Wednesday.

The disciplinary ban on male swimmers Hu Bin, Xiong Guoming, Fu Yong and Zhang Bin, and female swimmers Lu Bin, Zhou Guanbin and Yang Aihua will be dated from the day of their positive tests during the October 2-16 Games in Hiroshima, Japan, Yuan told AFP.

Yang Aihua, the world 400 metres freestyle champion, had already been banned by the International Swimming Federation (FINA) after failing a test just before the Asian Games on September 30.

Yuan stressed that the decision to ban the seven swimmers did not mean an end to the investigation into the mass doping, which has attracted widespread international condemnation.

The Chinese sports authorities have indicated that "other people concerned" in the scandal could also face punishment. Yuan added: "The investigation is not yet finished."

The seven swimmers were among 11 Chinese athletes who tested positive in Hiroshima. The other four were 400-metre hurdler Han Qing, male canoeists Zhang Lei and Qiu Suoren and cyclist Wang Yan.

Yuan said the ban had been imposed despite protests from some of the swimmers that they had never taken drugs.

"If the results show they have taken drugs, we must act accordingly, no matter what excuses they give," he said.

The Olympic Council of Asia decided on Saturday to withdraw the 25 medals won by the 11 Chinese athletes at Hiroshima.

Among the swimmers, Xiong Guoming won four golds, Lu Bin four golds, Hu Bin one gold, Zhou Guanbin one gold and Zhang Bin one gold. The swimming squad also won three silvers and one bronze.

In the other athletes involved, Zhang Lei won two golds, Wang Yan and Han Qing a gold each and Qiu Suoren a silver.

Ministry of Sports spokesman Shao Shiwei said Wednesday no formal decision had yet been taken regarding the four non-swimmers who also tested positive.

Many international coaches and experts say the failed tests by the swimmers confirms long-held suspicions that drug taking in China is systematic and organised. The Chinese strongly reject such allegations.

But the Australian Swimming Coaches Association Tuesday called for FINA to impose a blanket ban on Chinese competitors that would include the 1996 Atlanta Olympics and 1998 world championships.

Another Chinese swimmer tests positive

In Lausanne, Switzerland, yet another top Chinese women swimmer failed a dope test, the International Swimming Federation FINA said Tuesday.

FINA is awaiting explanations from China before naming the 12th competitor who failed a test in Japan in October.

A FINA official say the latest case involved a swimmer who won a gold medal at the World Championships in Rome in September.

She tested positive in a random dope test three days before the Asian Games opened, the FINA official said.

Also the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) has formally advised the Chinese federation that women's 400 metres hurdler Han Qing failed a dope test at October's Asian Games.

Han, who won the gold medal in Hiroshima, was one of 11 Chinese athletes from four different sports who tested positive for the steroid dehydrotestosterone. They have since been stripped of their medals by the Olympic Council of Asia.

Former Ma runner ends career

Liu Dong, who was thrown out of Ma Junren's army of runners after becoming 1,500 metre world champion, has decided to end her athletic career.

"Because of the difficulties I have had training, I have decided to abandon the sport so I can go into higher education," the 23-year-old told the Liaoning province sports commission, the Shanghai Evening newspaper said.

"I am asking the sports commission to help me officially leave my team to register with a university," she added.

Liu was with Ma's Liaoning-based team when she won the world title in Stuttgart in 1993. But she fell out with the world famous coach after refusing to give up her boyfriend.

The runner was reported to have put her world championship medal up for sale because she had no money to live on although Ma said at the Hiroshima Asian Games that he was prepared to take her back.

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WEST

♠ Q 10 9 8 4 2

♥ 7 6 5

♦ A 8 3

♣ Q 5

SOUTH

♠ A 8 4 3

♥ K 5 3

♦ A 3

♣ 10 9 4

The bidding:

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1 ♠ Pass 2 NT Pass

3 NT Pass Pass Pass

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three hearts—there could be slam in hearts or clubs when three no trump doesn't make!

West led the ten of diamonds, won by dummy's king. There were six tricks available in spades, hearts and diamonds, so only three were needed in clubs. If the queen of clubs was with West all was well. If East held the queen, though, a finesse would lose and a diamond return would put the hand in jeopardy. If the finesse lost and West held the ace of clubs, that would be the end of the contract.

Declarer found a pretty play for an extra chance. At trick two, South led a low club from dummy! Be honest: Would you, as East, play the queen in second seat, not knowing who held the ace? In any event, at the table East did not come up with that brilliancy.

West tried to give declarer a chance to go wrong by refusing to win the club, but the club distribution was now an open book. A low club was returned and, when West ducked again, declarer rose with the king. When the queen came tumbling down, declarer had earned a well-deserved overtrick.

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Verdict expected today 8 Turkish Kurd MPs may face execution

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkey's controversial trial of eight Kurdish former members of parliament, who face the death penalty for separatism, is due to end here today (Thursday) with delivery of a verdict which could have far-reaching consequences on Turkish relations with the West.

The seven men and a woman on trial in the state security court were members of the pro-Kurdish Party of Democracy, disbanded by the government last June.

The charges against them, of separatism and breaching the integrity of the state, strike at the very principles of the "one and indivisible" Turkish nation envisaged by the reformer Mustafa Kemal Ataturk when he founded the republic in 1923.

The prosecution has called for death sentences under section 125 of the penal code.

No death sentences have been carried out in Turkey for a decade.

The fate of the defendants, six of them held in prison since March and two since July, has created a furor in Western parliamentary circles and is souring Turkey's links with its allies.

They see the trial as an infringement of freedom of expression and of the principles of parliamentary democracy. There is no imputation of violence in the charges, which basically accuse the eight one-time MPs of making seditious statements, the allies argue.

But the Turkish state views the eight as spokesmen in parliament for the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which for 10 years has been battling the army in the Kurdish heartland of Anatolia in south-east and eastern Turkey, with a loss to date of some 15,000 lives.

MPs, lawyers and human rights campaigners have come to Turkey from Western countries to voice their dis-

quiet and to ask that the trial be dropped and the defendants freed. Some European lawyers, unable to plead the case of the eight in Turkey itself, are doing so in Europe.

A European diplomat said a "trap is waiting to be sprung" on Turkey. The death sentence or hefty prison sentences "would be very badly received in Europe."

French President Francois Mitterrand warned Turkey Tuesday that death sentences against the eight MPs would be a serious attack on human rights.

Mr. Mitterrand has written to other European leaders urging them to join him in supporting the deputies, according to aides.

"I hope it will be possible for you to join me in this action. In any case, I will appeal to public opinion," Mr. Mitterrand wrote to his European partners in an appeal for their support, the aides said.

Christopher: Arafat recognises Israel's security demands

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AFP) — PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat understands Israeli security demands ahead of the next stage of autonomy, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Wednesday.

"The chairman understands there will be no peace without security both for Israel and the Palestinians," Mr. Christopher told a press conference at Palestinian Authority headquarters.

The secretary added: "He made it clear he understands his responsibilities in the struggle against terrorism and violence."

Israeli and PLO delegations began negotiating in Cairo on Tuesday the next phase of self-rule, with the Jewish state's army pressing for a delay in the scheduled redeployment of the army on the West Bank.

After the murder of 45 Israelis since the launch of autonomy in May, the army fears redeployment will expose the 120,000 Jewish settlers on the West Bank.

"We had a very fruitful and positive meeting," Mr. Arafat said. "We talked about very quick elections and about the need for security for the Israelis."

Arafat was asked if he was prepared for an Israeli refusal to redeploy.

"As far as I know there is nothing... changed about what we have agreed and signed," he replied, referring to the 1993 declaration of principles (DOP) for autonomy which calls for an Israeli pull-back from Arab areas of the West Bank.

"We need elections soon because we are proud of democracy," he said.

One of Mr. Arafat's advisers, Marwan Kanafani, told journalists: "There was a common understanding that elections are very important."

"Elections are the most important thing to give to people on both sides a real feeling," for the peace process.

"The secretary was encouraging," Mr. Kanafani added saying the talks had also covered additional emergency help and U.S. aid.

Mr. Christopher had pledged America's good offices and assured the Palestinians he would do whatever possible to keep the process on the right track.

The U.S. envoy said: "We understand the importance of elections."

Detainees disappear, says Egyptian rights body

CAIRO (AFP) — Growing numbers of people are disappearing after being arrested in Egypt, where 16 new cases were recorded this year, the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights said in a report published Wednesday.

The organisation expressed "considerable concern" at the phenomenon, which was "unknown in Egypt until four years ago."

It said the disappearances of people in detention raised "serious fears that they may have already lost their lives."

Three such cases were recorded in the organisation's first report on the issue in July 1991, and three more

cases were brought to light in 1993, but "1994 has witnessed an unprecedented, high rate of enforced disappearance," with 16 new cases, recorded, the organisation said.

They included the disappearance last December of a prominent Libyan dissident in Cairo, Mansur Rashid Kikha. The former Libyan foreign minister was a member of the Arab Human Rights Organisation's directorate.

The Libyan government denied allegations that it had kidnapped Mr. Kikha. The other cases involved men who disappeared after arrest.

"Most persons were arrested by State Security Investigations (SSI) agents either from their houses, workplaces or from the street. They were taken to 'underground places,'" the report said.

Some had been missing since 1992, but the organisation only included them in the list "after losing all hope of being able either to find them or to determine their places of detention."

The report said the organisation had "exhausted all possible legal avenues and knocked on all administrative doors that may be of assistance in disclosing the fate of these persons."

European summit to tackle Bosnia, Mediterranean, E. Europe ties

From Ayman Al Safadi in Brussels

HEADS OF STATE of the European Union (EU) countries begin a two-day summit in the German city of Essen Friday in the shadow of what many see as the embarrassing failure of the group in dealing with Europe's first major security challenge in the post-cold war era: the Bosnian crisis.

A few, if any, observers expect the summit to produce any sufficient solution to the crisis which is seen to have exposed the fragility of the EU's security structures in an era in which NATO is facing an identity crisis with the demise of the Eastern bloc and the communist threat which the Atlantic alliance was created to counter.

The conflict in the Balkans is among a few foreign policy issues that will be on the agenda of the 12 European leaders who are hard-pressed to tackle domestic issues amidst fears that their performance on these matters will not be much better than that on the Bosnian crisis.

Newspaper reports quoted leading European businessmen as expressing fear that the economic recovery the continent is experiencing could render the European leaders complacent in tackling economic problems that can be solved only through adopting painful economic restructuring programmes.

Economic experts have little expectations that the summit will be able to produce sufficient solutions to an unemployment crisis from which the majority of EU countries are suffering.

Measures to handle the jobless problem will require huge cuts in government's expenditure and social benefits, unpopular steps that not many governments are willing to take as the European economies are showing a slow, but steady recovery.

But despite the EU's pressing need to focus on domestic issues, European officials say the summit, which will mark the end of the German presidency of the union, will address its



Middle Eastern policy and means of consolidating cooperation between the two regions.

European officials say the summit will discuss a proposal by the European Commission to start a long-term 5 billion European currency units (ECU) development package to the Mediterranean region.

Though it is very unlikely that the summit will reach a decision on the proposal, European officials expect the EU leaders to approve a proposal to hold a conference for cooperation with the Mediterranean region in late 1995, when Spain holds the presidency.

They also expect the summit to result in a clear commitment to supporting Mediterranean countries with a substantial increase in the amounts of aid, especially for countries involved in the peace process with Israel.

Those officials also expect the EU to focus more on its relations with the region in the coming year as the presidency of the union will rotate among France, Spain and Italy respectively.

Three Mediterranean countries with special interest in bolstering ties with the region. Unlike northern European nations which are

more concerned with developments in Eastern and Central Europe, France, Spain and Italy speak of the necessity of articulating strong supportive policies towards their neighbours to the south with the purpose of consolidating stability in the region and preempting any destabilising economic and political developments that could spill into their territories.

But beyond their concern for promoting stability in the Mediterranean region through development aid, stronger trade ties and "partnership" agreements, the southern European nations want to strengthen the EU's relations with the South out of fear they will become on the "periphery" of Europe once it completes its expansion northwards, European officials say.

With expectations that most Eastern European countries will eventually join the union, the depth of the EU will move northwards and the weight of the southern EU members will be marginalised unless some sort of expansion to the south is achieved. This expansion cannot be achieved through membership of non-European countries in the EU, but an

alternative, pushed for by the southern EU countries with the support of some other European nations is "partnership" agreements that can culminate in a free trade area.

Despite the support of northern European countries to the strengthening of ties with the Mediterranean region, however, observers agree that the Mediterranean will be competing for the scarce developments of the EU with countries closer to Eastern Europe seeing it as the priority and those in the South lobbying for the Mediterranean.

But according to Ingo Friedrich, president of the Mashreq Committee at the European Parliament, the stability of all European neighbours is a concern for the EU because the repercussions of conflicts in any area will be felt in Europe.

Accordingly, say other European officials, the Mediterranean region will continue to be a European priority even though the degree of support and attention given to it will fluctuate according to developments in the region and in Europe itself.

Michael Webb, coordinator at the Mashreq, Israel unit at the general directorate at the European Commission says the EU will be working towards creating a free trade area between Europe and some Middle Eastern countries. In the case of Jordan, he says that could be achieved within 12 years during which the EU will be helping the Kingdom offset negative economic effects that could result from the restructuring programme that would be required.

Meanwhile, the Kingdom and the EU will next week begin preparatory talks on a trade cooperation agreement that will replace the current one which was reached in the 1970s and deals only with trade issues and financial protocols. The new agreement, which Mr. Webb expects negotiations over it, to end in six months, will include steps towards establishing free trade area between the Kingdom and the EU.

Prince Rainier leaves hospital

MONTE CARLO, Monaco (AP) — Prince Rainier was released from Monaco's hospital after a successful recovery from double bypass heart surgery Nov. 25. Prince Rainier, 71, spent two days in the intensive care unit, then transferred to a normal room where he received visits from his family and ate regular hospital meals. The royal palace denied reports surfacing immediately after the operation suggesting that Prince Rainier, Monaco's sovereign since 1949, would abdicate in favour of his son and heir, Prince Albert.

Leaked memo shows cost of U.K. royal courtiers

LONDON (R) — As many as 100 courtiers and staff of Britain's royal family are living rent-free in five palaces maintained by the taxpayer for Queen Elizabeth, the Guardian newspaper reported Wednesday. The information was detailed in a confidential memo to members of parliament from Sir John Bourn, parliament's comptroller and auditor general, which the newspaper obtained. It was certain to add to the debate over proposals by the opposition Labour Party to slim down the royal family. The Guardian report says apartments, some worth millions of pounds, are rented for as little as £39 (\$60) a week to courtiers. It also lists 94 rent-free apartments with eight occupied by minor royals. The report also said the royal family was reviewing perks for its staff. In 1992, the queen acted on criticism about royal wealth by offering to pay income tax and cutting the number of her family members on the state payroll.

Quayle discharged from hospital

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana (AFP) — Former vice president Dan Quayle was discharged from the hospital Tuesday, saying he expected a full recovery from a blood clot on his lungs and would decide in January whether to run for president in 1996. "I feel good. I will have a full recovery. It's going to take a little time. But all the physicians, all the analysis indicate it's going to be a full recovery," Mr. Quayle said as he left the Indiana University Medical Centre. Clots on both lungs were discovered when Mr. Quayle, 47, was admitted to the hospital a week ago with shortness of breath. Doctors believe the clots formed because of the vice president's long periods of sitting on airplanes. Mr. Quayle, who still suffers from shortness of breath, said he would be resuming a normal active life in four weeks.

Rental house sold, Fergie must move

LONDON (AP) — The country lodge that has been home to the Duchess of York and her two princesses was sold and they're looking for a new place to live. The former Sarah Ferguson rented the six-bedroom Romenda Lodge, near Windsor Castle, 20 miles (30-kms) west of London, after separating from Prince Andrew more than two years ago. "She has to move out by the end of January and hasn't found anywhere else yet," said the duchess's spokeswoman, requesting customary anonymity. The property was sold this month to a businessman who wants to move his family in next month. Princess Beatrice, six, and Eugenie, 4, go to school about five miles (8-kms) away from the £900,000 (\$1.4 million) house, which has extensive grounds and a swimming pool.

Dental X-rays can show potential strokes — report

LOS ANGELES (R) — Panoramic mouth X-rays taken during routine dental examinations can detect stroke-causing plaques in the neck arteries of patients who otherwise exhibit no symptoms, according to a study by the University of California-Los Angeles School of Dentistry.

Jerusalem's Greek Orthodox church dismisses reports its members are arming

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Greek Orthodox church in Jerusalem Tuesday denied that any of its priests was arrested by the Israeli authorities for possession of arms which the Israeli police says were intended to be used to protect Christians against Muslim fundamentalists.

In an advertisement published in the Arabic press Tuesday, the Jerusalem-based Greek Orthodox Patriarchate dismissed the reports as only aiming "to sow the seeds of disunity and to further feelings of hatred and malice" among Christians and Muslims.

The Jerusalem Post and several foreign news agencies Sunday reported that seven Jerusalemite Christians, including a Greek Orthodox priest, were arrested last week for allegedly forming an armed group to protect Christians from Muslim radicals.

The Post quoted Jerusalem police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby as saying five of

the seven were remanded for seven days. It said the other two, including the priest whose accidental injury while using one of the group's weapons led to the arrests, were released on bail.

The newspaper said the arrests followed reports that attacks by Muslim extremists on Christian targets in occupied Jerusalem have increased in recent months.

"The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate condemns such news that were spread recently, especially at such a crucial stage, and denounces their content as a whole," the advertisement signed by the Patriarchate's spokesman in the Old City, said.

Such news "aim at undermining the confidence our church and community have enjoyed for generations since the time of the Omari Pact," the statement said in reference to the pact signed by Caliph Omar Ibn Al Khat-tab who entered the city after it fell to the Arabs in the 7th century A.D. The Omari

Pact sought to protect the rights of religious minorities in the Holy City.

The statement challenged the Israeli police to reveal the identity of the alleged priest to prove the truth of its claims and said the patriarchate reserved its right to take those spreading such "suspicious" lies to court.

The Jerusalem Post identified the injured priest as Father John Kodsodimitrophilos, 25.

"We all declare, as Muslims and Christians, that we are partners for better or for worse in our joint struggle as we share the same destiny, and are working to consolidate national unity that we enjoyed for generations," said the patriarchate's statement, warning that it would not allow any party with ill-designs to infiltrate the ranks of Arabs or "our principled religion which was baptised by the blood of our joint martyrs."

It stressed that the patriarchate would always seek to safeguard the good and warm relations between Muslims and Christians and voiced allegiance for the leadership of His Majesty King Hussein and the Hashemite family.

The father, according to The Post, told police that a bomb was thrown at him on the Via Dolorosa, but police found no signs of a bomb during a search of the area.

It added that intelligence tips led investigators to two homes in the Christian quarter of the Old City, where caches of arms including a home-made gun, knives, spiked clubs, and other light weapons were found.

The priest admitted later that he was not wounded in a bomb attack but rather when a home-made gun blew up in his hand, the newspaper quoted the police spokesman as saying.

Iran ready to send 10,000 troops to Bosnia

GENEVA (AFP) — Iran is ready to send 10,000 troops to serve with the U.N. force in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iran's foreign minister said Wednesday, but said some Security Council members were apparently against the idea.

"We are ready to send 10,000 troops, who are well equipped, to Bosnia under the flag of the United Nations," said Ali Akbar Velayati, speaking to journalists here.

He said Iran and several other Islamic nations had proposed in October to U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali to send at least 20,000 men to Bosnia.

But Dr. Ghali "said that some of the permanent members of the Security Council

are against it." No countries were named, but the five permanent members are the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia.

"If you don't have enough peacekeeping forces we are ready to send at least 20,000 troops from Iran, Pakistan, Turkey and Malaysia," Mr. Velayati said he told Dr. Ghali.

On Tuesday, foreign ministers from countries in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), meeting here, accused the U.N. of bungling its mission in Bosnia — which has a Muslim-led government — and urged the U.N. to boost the U.N. Protection Force there from its current 24,000 troops to 35,000.

Arab Gulf military integration moving slowly

By Ashraf Fouad Reuter

DUBAI — Gulf Arab states are gradually expanding their small joint army but an ambitious plan to standardise and eventually integrate their defences appears to be some way off, Arab military experts and diplomats said.

"They are not abandoning the goal but they now have greater appreciation of the difficulties involved," said an Arab expert of plans drawn up by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

GCC leaders are to discuss at an annual summit in Bahrain later this month how much has been done so far about an earlier decision to double their joint Peninsula Shield Force, based in Saudi Arabia, to around 17,000

men, diplomats said.

A year-old committee, headed by the UAE, will also report on long-term plans to bring naval and air force units into the joint force, join their air defences and create a common early warning system, they added.

The military experts said, however, the 14-year-old alliance was meeting similar problems to those faced by other groups of nations trying to integrate their defences.

They listed among them lack of standardisation between the six armies, the various origins of hardware deployed, different specifications and in some cases reluctance to surrender authority in a way that may affect sovereignty.

"One state uses metric system, the other uses inches... if, for example, a Qatari (batle) tank pulls into a Saudi fuel depot, the nozzle will not

fit into the gas tank," said another expert familiar with the GCC talks.

Saudi Arabia, the largest, wealthiest and most populous of the six states, had also the most developed military infrastructure, was the strongest militarily and its generals have so far commanded the GCC's Peninsula Shield.

As an example, the experts said as the only GCC state which has an AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) system of its own, Saudi Arabia favoured an integrated regional air defence systems based on its own central command.

"The Saudi AWACS jets cover the whole Gulf region and beyond. So, they argue, why should they surrender that capability to other states who only have terrestrial air defence systems?" one expert said.

Independent European experts said the technical difficulties of integrating the air defence systems meant the plan could take up to 10 years to complete and would need massive funding.

Arab experts said some GCC members were also not yet persuaded of the wisdom of unifying arms purchases, suggested as a way of easing integration and bringing down purchase costs.

Some GCC members argue that "there is a difference between specification and buying from the same origin. You can still integrate hardware originating from various sources as long as common specifications are met," one expert said.

"Because Saudi Arabia has the biggest military and is buying mainly from the United States, that does not mean others should do the same," he added.

But Saudi Arabia seems to have accepted that argument.

Following a GCC defence ministers' meeting in Riyadh in November, its Defence Minister Prince Sultan Bin Abdul-Aziz said "each country has the right to buy what it deems fit."

Despite the differences, experts and officials plan to integrate GCC defences.

"This does not mean they are discarding the plans, just that there are different views and many proposals will be discussed over the years to come," one said.

Prince Sultan denied suggestions that differences within the GCC were hindering its plans and added another dimension when he revealed that consultations were underway among the group to create a joint arms industry.